THE BOOKMAN

Edited by Seward Collins

AUGUST, 1930 VOL. LXXI; NO. 5

JOHN MASEFIELD: POET LAUREATE

by Odell Shepard

THE RECENT appointment of John Masefield, avowed spokesman of the underdog, to an honored position in the Royal Household has a piquancy that must have set many persons to re-reading poems long familiar. And it seems likely that not only those who think the Laureateship important are doing this but some, also, of the few who are thoughtfully concerned with the state of literature at the present time. For these few will not have forgotten that Mr. Masefield was chiefly responsible for the hope, once common and not yet quite abandoned, that our age was to have a poetry of its own, suited to its needs and nature, written in its language. They can still remember how *The Everlasting Mercy* flashed through the English-reading world in the closing months of 1911, how it seemed to sap the color from all other contemporary verse, and how we felt and said that here at last was "life" (how fond we were and are of the word!) and that while there was life there was hope. Today, therefore, while they read the *Collected Poems* of the new Laureate, they will be asking themselves what the promised forward march in poetry has amounted to during these nineteen years, and what has been the loss and gain of the poet whom they took to be its fugleman. A very few may even see this further value and interest in a reconsideration of Masefield, that he is highly representative of our times. Unlike such lonely pioneers as De la Mare and Robinson, who lead us into new countries of the mind, he is a popular poet, one who has shown repeatedly the skill of a journalist in "giving the public what it wants". In thinking somewhat closely about him, therefore, we may perhaps sharpen and extend our acquaintance with ourselves.

This appointment, even when one considers that it comes from a Labor Government, is at first thought a little surprising, and seems to mark a sharp divergence from the tradition of the office. Three poets of the first rank have dignified the Laureateship during the last hundred years, but, of these, Robert Bridges despised the common man and said so; Tennyson, for all his twinges of sentimental humanitarianism, had the artistocrat's conviction that every man below the rank of the "squirearchy" must be kept in his

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place; and Wordsworth had too close and painful a knowledge of the French Revolution to trust in practice the plebeian simplicity which he praised in his poems and prefaces. These Poets Laureate, then, were men who might naturally be chosen for an office which, from Virgil and Petrarch down, has been thought to entail the glorification of rank and privilege. John Masefield, on the other hand, has early and late proclaimed his championship of the despised and rejected:

Not the ruler for me, but the ranker, the tramp
of the road,
The slave with the sack on his shoulders pricked
on with the goad,
The man with too weighty a burden, too weary
a load. . . .

Others may sing of the wine and the wealth and
the mirth,
The portly presence of potentates goodly in
girth;—
Mine be the dirt and the dross, the dust and scum
of the earth!

Such was this poet's "consecration" of himself, and it reads somewhat strangely now that we must think of him as Verse-Maker by Special Appointment to the King. It would seem that there must have been a change in the fashion of kings' poets—although of course we know that kings are changing too.

Superficially considered, "A Consecration", looks like a little manifesto on the side of literary realism, and probably it was so intended. In the Introduction to his *Collected Poems* Mr. Masefield has said that the minds of men seem always to "follow one of two purposes in art. . . . Either they strive toward a greater elaboration of artifice or for a greater closeness to reality". The implication of the context is that he thinks his own work tends away from artifice toward a direct presentation of things as they are. No doubt he does really think this, for he has implied it in several other places, and this is certainly the opinion held of him by his more naïve admirers. They believe—although he, of course, knows better—that he has drawn his "inspiration" not at all from literature but from the actual rough-and-tumble of life. When tested by the verse Mr. Masefield has written, however, this opinion is seen to be simply absurd. In his quite different way, he is as artificial as Tennyson or Ronsard or Theocritus; and furthermore he is, again in a way quite different, as bookish as Longfellow. The very lines quoted above from "A Consecration" are thoroughly artificial, heavily decorated with youthful rhetoric and elaborate alliteration—although in saying so one should perhaps guard against any possible suggestion that they are therefore "insincere".

Let any one who still thinks Masefield quite original and unbookish turn to the last few titles of *Salt Water Ballads* as printed in the collected edition. He will see that "A Ballad of Cape St. Vincent" and the two poems following it are in fairly pure Kiplingese, that "D'Avalos' Prayer" is the same, that "The West Wind" is Yeats and Housman with a tincture of Masefield, that "Vagabond" is watered Kipling, that "Personal" and "On Malvern Hill" are Housman's own, that "'Rest Her Soul, She's Dead'" derives from Matthew Arnold, that "In Memory of A. P. R." is Housman again, "Tomorrow" is Kipling, "Cavalier" is Browning, and "A Song at Parting" suggests Stevenson and Yeats. (The proportion of Yeats is much less in the poems named than it would be in another series of selections.) From these thirteen pages I can select only one poem, "On Eastnor Knoll", that is unmistakably written in Masefield's own idiom, showing his characteristic mood and vision, and even this vividly recalls certain familiar lines by W. E. Henley. The fact is that throughout *Salt Water Ballads* Masefield is looking at the sea and sea-life and "the old brown hills"—things he is supposed to report upon at first hand—through books, and he sings about them in the rhythms and tones of other men. These poems were all written, needless to say, when he was still learning his art, and the sedulous aping

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so evident in them is of course nothing to his discredit or to theirs. I am concerned only to point out that this is not the way in which an unbookish and wholly "original" poet gets his training and grows up.

Neither is this the way of a man whose bent is strongly against the elaboration of artifice. John Masefield uses and elaborates artifice constantly, as every poet and indeed every artist must do. His distinction between the poets of artifice and those who seek "a greater closeness to reality" is in fact untenable, for all legitimate literary artifice has as its main purpose the production of an "illusion of reality". The question is not, therefore, whether a given poet employs artifice, for this he must do, but whether he uses it well and to right ends—a question we answer most clearly when we can say whether he secures an "illusion of reality" or only "realism".

This question is not hard to answer with regard to the poetry of John Masefield. It differs from the poetry of Tennyson, let us say, not in being less artificial and not in attaining greater closeness to reality but in being—at least now and then, for Masefield has no settled style—"realistic". In order to see this quite clearly one need only compare the cursing match near the beginning of *The Everlasting Mercy* with Tennyson at his worst—say in those sickly euphemisms, justly ridiculed by Bagehot, in which the earlier Laureate tried to suggest without offence that Enoch Arden, a fisherman, carried with him an odor of fish. Now those who prefer in their poetry such carefully culled expressions as "You closhy put. . . . You bloody liar" to the gingerly circumlocutions in which Tennyson referred to Enoch's fish-basket are certainly entitled to their choice, but the important point is that both poets are in these passages remote from reality and that "nothing resembles a hollow so much as a swelling". The advantage, if there is any, is with Tennyson because he knew, and so did all his readers, that this passage was artificial, being written in a style of deliberate circumlocution which had behind it many centuries of honorable practice; but Mr. Masefield seems to think, as many of his readers have certainly been beguiled into thinking, that the crudity and violence of *The Everlasting Mercy* and *The Widow in the Bye Street* represent "reality". Ah, but reality is harder to capture than this would amount to, and it is not to be taken at all by merely turning the fair false dreams of romanticism upside down or inside out. Such events as these poems describe may happen, have happened, but as they are here told they possess no representative value. One does not doubt the facts; one merely says that they do not tell the truth.

To understand how remote from reality Masefield's more violent writing is and to see that it is merely romance pulled inside out, one might do well to compare it with the work of Robert Frost. In the course of such a comparison one is likely to question whether the English poet really cares for reality at all and whether a good part of his energy is not spent in trying to escape it. At no time, so far as his writing shows, has he made a sustained effort to see life steadily and whole. In his later verse and imaginative prose he seldom sings and almost never talks or thinks connectedly; his characteristic tone is a shout, often rising to stridor and then sinking into sepulchral awe-struck monotones. One suspects that he does not trust reality but fears that it would not endure calm examination. It may be that he has lost the faith that poets live by, and that this explains his falling so frequently back upon physical force and speed, upon mere excitement, oddly interwoven with sighs out of the Celtic Twilight after the vague abstraction "Beauty".

But it will not do, while seeing and saying such things, to ignore the enormous difficulties that confront a poet such as Masefield in our time—a poet, that is, who still clings to the old romantic notion of the bard as a teacher, preacher, and minor Messiah. There

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is still nobility and strength in this old idea, but today there is also torment; for since the death of Wordsworth, the last great English poet who has thought himself, "else sinning greatly, a dedicated spirit", the foundations of the poet's faith, together with a great part of his vocabulary, have been swept away. Poetic metaphor, his very language, is comparatively a poor and shrivelled speech now that he can no longer regard external nature as a subsidiary revelation of the Divine. Now that most of us have put off our immortal yearnings and have decided that the so-called Spirit of Man, about which the old poets made such a bother, is really no more than a little water and a few salts, the poet finds himself in danger of falling from among the "unacknowledged legislators of the world" into the ranks of the numberless entertainers we keep about us to tease us out of thought. John Masefield has managed to save out of this catastrophe, it would seem, hardly anything but his vague and vacillating aspiration toward abstract "Beauty", concerning which it is hard to make out much except that it probably derives from William Butler Yeats. In his intellectual situation Masefield might do either of two things: track his thought back to its springs in Plato, and so become a metaphysician, or else tighten and steadily maintain his grip on the concrete things of the senses, clasping them all the more tenaciously "*because* they die". As it is, he oscillates from one to the other, leaps from scenes of brutality to dim visions of the Mystic Rose, and gives us altogether the most extraordinary exhibition of *Stimmungsbrechung* and ventriloquism that we have heard in English since the days of the Spasmodic School.

Meanwhile, it is clear that all of Masefield's true poetry is concerned with the concrete, as poetry is likely to be. In the ages of faith the concrete world of the senses was constantly felt to mean something beyond itself, but now that it is shorn of these overtones the poet must use it still. And there is often a pathos in the contemporary use of it such as has not been known in the Western world since the time of the Greek Anthology. One feels this pathos of evanescence and eternal farewell in many of John Masefield's quieter poems, though never more poignantly than in "August, 1914". Even in his passages of speed and violence and uproar it is present, though shouted down. Indeed, one might perhaps say that Masefield makes haste to shout lest he begin to weep. In his characteristic passages of cataloguing and itemization such as that in "Cargoes" or that in the first part of *Reynard the Fox* he seems to be saying: "See all these many things, in a world of flux and all-conquering death, that we can be quite sure about!" But can we be sure of them, or can he? If so, why such insistence?

Instead of facing reality steadily, John Masefield seems to see the world about him only by lightning flashes, and so it is not strange that he finds it somewhat lurid. Emerson's doctrine of the "ecstatic moment", which had already a long history in Emerson's time and which was much degraded as well as widely disseminated in Pater's famous "Epilogue", has become with Masefield almost a philosophy of life. For him these golden instants—best described in the poem called "Biography"—are apparently all we have, so that he can say of them, not originally but with sad conviction:

> Best trust the happy moments. What they gave
> Makes man less fearful of the certain grave.

And what, then, does Masefield mean by "happy moments"? Judging from the examples given in this same poem, he means the moments of intense experience, moments of thrill and excitement. He tests the value of an experience by its intensity, which he does not sufficiently distinguish from mere violence. Like Robert Browning, he tends to evaluate human beings by their passionate intensity, and he evidently feels not only that passion is its own reward but its own excuse for being. Obviously, there is no vice or crime—provided only that one is violently and passionately inclined to it—that

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this principle cannot be made to run to. For example, Masefield's Gwenivere, looking back after Lancelot's death over her own somewhat peccant career as an adulteress and runaway nun, exclaims:

What though I broke both nun's and marriage-vows . . .
Love . . . will atone.

By "love" she means passion, intensity, golden instants, "happy moments", and the fact that she has had these will atone for the fact that her passion has wrecked the realm, ruined the goodliest fellowship of knights, shamed her lord, killed her lover. Perhaps it is as well that Shelley's proud words about poets as the unacknowledged legislators of the world have not yet come true, for this sort of legislation would land us very soon in savagery.

In *The Everlasting Mercy* we find passion and intensity of the grossest sort naïvely juxtaposed with alleged religious experience. Alcoholic and sexual debauchery is capped by emotional debauch leading to what we are asked to accept as mystic vision and instantaneous conversion. (Again, I am not denying that such things happen.) The conversion of Saul Kane, which takes place while he is watching a drop of gin roll from the bar to the floor and is inspired by a prolonged period of miscellaneous bestiality, is his "ecstatic moment". Highly characteristic and marvellously vivid is Masefield's manner of telling the story, and most significant is the jerk from gin to the Holy Presence:

Miss Bourne stood still and I stood still,
And "Tick. Slow. Tick. Slow" went the clock.
She said, "He waits until you knock."
She turned at that and went out swift,
Si grinned and winked, his missus sniffed.

I heard her clang the Lion door,
I marked a drink-drop roll to floor;
It took up scraps of sawdust, furry,
And crinkled on, a half inch, blurry;
A drop from my last glass of gin;
And someone waiting to come in,
A hand upon the door latch gropen
Knocking the man inside to open.
I know the very words I said,
They bayed like bloodhounds in my head.
"The water's going out to sea
And there's a great moon calling me;
But there's a great sun calls the moon,
And all God's bells will carol soon
For joy and glory and delight
Of someone coming home tonight."

This is already a famous passage, and in some ways it deserves to be, yet one feels that there should be and that there is a greater difference than is here indicated between the emotional preparation for religious experience and that which leads, let us say, to murder. Saul Kane, for all that is shown, might as well have taken the one turn as the other, and we do not feel assured that when his religious excitement wanes he will not try a little murder for variety. A man such as he, a mere bundle of passions never controlled, accustomed to living at a high pitch of emotional intensity, will soon tire of hard labor with Farmer Callow—and when he tires he will turn to something else very passionate and intense.

On the whole this doctrine of the ecstatic moment, this burning always with a hard clear gem-like flame, seems a sorry creed to build a life upon—sufficient for a boy, perhaps, but inadequate for any normal manhood, tragic in old age, and quite insufficient to nourish and sustain a major poet. We need not wonder, therefore, that John Masefield has written a good deal for boys, or that much of his most popular work gives the impression of having been written *by* a boy—one, to be sure, with amazing funds of information, with an immense vocabulary, and with eyes that devour whatever moving or highly colored thing they fall upon, but still an unreflective boy, eager for impressions and excitement. By this suggestion I certainly do not mean to imply that his work is puerile, and I am well aware that half a dozen of his poems are the work of a mature mind profoundly moved and speaking with its total ac-

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cumulation of force and wisdom. Such things as "The Faithful", "The Hounds of Hell", and "August, 1914", however, show what he might perhaps have steadily been, whereas *Reynard the Fox* and *Right Royal*, to choose the most favorable examples, show what his romantic and sensationalistic philosophy has allowed him to become.

The settled boyishness of much of Masefield's writing is, I think, unmistakable, and in almost any other time than ours, in which childhood and youth are absurdly overpraised and deferred to and imitated, it would have been pointed out more promptly. His fascinated delight in physical conflict and speed and hard blows, his strength in describing violent action and his weakness in tracing close thought or subdued emotion, his preference for crude characters—including the lower animals—his deficiency in humorous self-criticism, his perplexity at London and hatred of all great centers of civilization, his sentimentalism, his evangelism, perhaps most of all his view of women as quite too sweet and good for human nature's daily food—what can these things indicate if not that his mind, superbly eloquent and versatile though it is, has failed to attain maturity? There are times when one feels tempted to say of him, as some one has wittily said about Amy Lowell, that he has no brain above the eyes, and frequently in reading him one must recur to Goethe's remark about Byron: "He is a child when he reflects". This does not apply to the sonnets of *Lollingdon Downs*, or to the admirable little book on Shakespeare, which is one of the most delightful of his productions, yet it is applicable to nine-tenths of his work in prose and verse. Had he never done that other one-tenth we should have ignored him, but as matters now stand we are justified in testing him by high standards. He is entitled to the extreme rigor of criticism.

If only he had learned, long since, to apply such criticism to himself! What does it mean, for example, that two of the feeblest poems he has ever published stand at the very end of his last collected edition, as though they were his latest and therefore his ripest work? And again, what does it mean that one who feels himself indebted to John Masefield for much keen poetical enjoyment should find himself reluctant even to mention the Laureate's latest considerable production, the series of Arthurian stories called *Midsummer Night*? Does it indicate that a boyish attitude of mind, a constant search for excitement and intensity and "thrills", does not serve one well with the coming on of the years? After all, it is the thinker who grows, who smiles at old age as a friend, and Masefield has himself said that "vitality is shown by capacity for thought". Or perhaps we need remember only that Masefield is a professional poet (what a ludicrous contradiction in terms!) from whom a sheaf of verse, of whatever quality, is regularly expected. He has said that "if you sit down to write day after day for months on end, you can feel the scum growing on your mind". True enough, and painfully true; yet nothing should force a writer to put that scum before the world. Or, finally, we may consider that Masefield is and has long been a successful poet, with a larger following, it seems likely, than any other important contemporary writer of English verse. Has his reputation at last become a little intimidating to him, as to many of his readers? On this matter also he has said the appropriate word: "Success is the brand on the brow for aiming low".

Whatever else the bathos of *Midsummer Night* may signify, the publication of it shows that Masefield cannot or will not criticize his own work. He has shown this more than once before, for he followed the crude but immensely vigorous *Everlasting Mercy* with the cruder but lifeless *Widow in the Bye Street*; and after *Dauber*, powerfully conceived and containing—at the opening of Part VI—some of the most thrilling stanzas in English literature, came the flaccid *Daffodil Fields*. Furthermore, in all but the very

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best of his work, what crashing falls there are from poetry to flattest prose, what numberless lines that merely fill out the rhyme, what quantities of awkward verbal upholstery! All this is familiar enough, and if it had not been obvious even to the most friendly reader then Mr. J. C. Squire's merciless parodies of the Masefield manner would have made it so. But it is entirely gratuitous to write exaggerated imitations of Masefield, for he has himself written—apparently with quite serious intent—this amazing parody of his own style:

> Young Will, the son,
> Heard his sister shriek,
> He took his gun
> Quick as a streak.
>
> He said, "Now, Dad,
> Stop, once for all."
> He was a good lad,
> Good at kicking the ball.
>
> His father clubbed
> The girl on the head.
> Young Will upped
> And shot him dead.

The remainder of this poem may be found in *Lollingdon Downs*. It goes from bad to worse. The most diabolical of parodists could scarcely have imagined anything so atrocious.

In his extraordinary power of "getting up a topic" Masefield shows one of the subordinate traits of the first-rate writer. Whatever his subject may be, and he has written upon a wide range of different matters, he seems to see it from the inside and to dominate it entirely. His book *Sea Life in Nelson's Time* is a masterpiece of patient research. The chapters on the sleeping sickness and the tsetse fly in *Multitude and Solitude*—all earnestly excavated, no doubt, in the reading room of the British Museum—are written with the authority of an expert. This is a faculty that is seldom sufficiently praised. It is one of the great merits of Daniel Defoe, whom John Masefield resembles in more than one respect. It was one of the characteristics of Shakespeare.

Whatever Masefield has seen with interested attention he can make his reader see. Whatever moves or shines he watches, and remembers. He has the graphic power of John Ruskin, and he often uses it as minutely, though with reference to quite different objects. Vivid color delights him, but he seems to have little of Ruskin's eye for symmetry, intricate structure, and spatial rhythms. His most remarkable ability lies in the rendering of swift motion coupled with the excitement of a hunt, a race, or an escape, and here he is as certainly supreme as Milton is in the suggestion of vast space. Often, too, he goes beyond observation and shows us things that can never have fallen before his eye. In this category falls his description of Arthur's burning of the pirate ship in "Badon Hill", and the passages about the deserted fear-stricken downs in "The Hounds of Hell" show imagination of a high order.

The fact is that when John Masefield is mastered and absorbed by his subject, so that he forgets his mannerisms and no longer tries to write like John Masefield, he can write about simple things and emotions as well as any one now at work. So he wrote in "August, 1914"—one of the few pure and perfect treasures that we won by four years of agony—and so again in his prose book *Gallipoli*, and once again in the only longer poem of his in which an exacting taste can find hardly a line to alter, "The Hounds of Hell". It is little less than a calamity that one who can write such things as these at all should do it so seldom.

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WHIPPOORWILL

by Mavis Clare Barnett

At midnight when the woods were still
He heard the hidden whippoorwill,
The whippoorwill, the near, clear whippoorwill.
Near as the black and burbling spring,
Nearer than midnight at his ear,
What plaintive, melancholy thing,
Too near, too near and clear?

What centuries of mournful pain,
What ages unconsoled of grief
That it should whimper here again,
A stone's throw from this leaf?

He dared not set his foot ahead,
He dared not reach his hand along
Some unseen, steadier branch for dread
Of trampling on a song.
But through the uncalculable hush
About him in the underbrush
He seemed to hear within that throat
The preparation for the note,
The next note laboring up to be.
O dread, O dread expectancy!

For when the moon began to make
More luminous among the brake
The great fern-tops and he could see
Each black frond cut out separately,
Then from the leaf, that same leaf still,
He heard the hidden whippoorwill,
The whippoorwill, the near, clear whippoorwill.

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Till something troubled him to hear,
Though what it was he could not say,
Except that something came too near
Which should have whistled far away.
And now it was like any grief
Cried in his childhood which he heard,
And now by that portentous leaf
He stayed and listened to the bird
Until the incredible certainty
Of all he yet must be
Was greater in him than fatality.

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THE DECADE OF CONVICTIONS

by V. F. Calverton

NOTE:—*The author of this survey of recent American literature is probably the best-known American critic whose approach is that of Marxian Communism. "Bookman" readers will be especially interested in the conclusion which Mr. Calverton reaches, in common with an increasing number of observers, that during the coming decade both writers and readers will be forced to align themselves with either Communism or humanism.*—THE EDITOR.

THE IMPULSE to revolt in modern American literature can be traced to the closing of the frontier in the eighties and the ensuing transformation of America from an agrarian to an industrial nation. This shift in economic emphasis brought with it new conflicts and new conceptions. The rise of American imperialism in the twentieth century, punctuated by the World War and accelerated by its aftermaths, only added intensity to these new problems. It is not until the second decade in the century, however, that these problems begin to find active expression in literature. If 1914 may be designated as the year in which this insurgency first reaches a focal point, 1929 may be described as the year in which this insurgency faces its end. 1930 already marks the beginning of a new period in American literature.

In accordance with historical tendency, we always find revolt first setting in against those new developments which are prone to eclipse the old. For at least four decades now the city in America has grown at the expense of the country. Our whole civilization, as a consequence, has grown further and further away from the soil. The farmer has been caught in a losing struggle with the financier. Frank Norris was one of the first of our novelists to take up cudgels in defence of the "ranch against the railroad", which was his way of defining the conflict. In his novel *The Octopus* this struggle achieved a moving but melodramatic climax. Edward Bellamy in *The Duke of Stockbridge* was concerned with this same clash. Hamlin Garland, too, dealt with it in another form in several of his earlier books. Mr. Garland, in fact, was one of the first to point out the real tragedy of defeat that underlay this struggle. The defeat of the pioneer farmer meant the quick destruction of American idealism. If this literature of revolt and lamentation had stopped there, we should not be concerned with it in this essay. What we find, however, is that even today, with the city everywhere victorious, writers such as Willa Cather, Ruth Suckow and Sherwood Anderson continue to dedicate a considerable part of their work to this same theme.

Willa Cather's Antonia grows as intimately out of the soil as a tree or a flower. Her Alexandra finds her ecstasy in the earth rather than in the artificial and vicarious devices of art. And yet, as Miss Cather reveals in her later novels, *A Lost Lady* and *The Professor's House,* all this devotion is to a lost cause. The spirit of the pioneer is dead.

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The old ideals of the country have been ruined by the predatory advances of the city. Only emotional emptiness remains and the desolation that follows defeat. Ruth Suckow's *Country People* is a literary testimony to what has occurred. Her characters are dull, drab people, unimaginative as robots. It is they who are typical of the new generations of "country people" who have come into being since the passing of the frontier, and whose more aspiring but not more enticing cousins in the small town Sinclair Lewis has satirized with such success. If we except such writers as John T. Frederick, and certain of the interesting but minor authors gathered within the pages of *The Midland Magazine,* and, we might add, Glenway Wescott, who still moves in this tradition, Sherwood Anderson can be said to be the last of that group of novelists whose interests and enthusiasms are still more with the country than with the city. Sherwood Anderson, for example, to this very day is a believer in the artisan and not the machine. He would have us go back to our hands for inspiration. The machine which destroys the use of hands is an enemy of civilization—for it is in hands, Anderson says, that we find "the beginning of that love of surface, of the sensual love of materials, without which no true civilization can be born". Almost every story and novel of Anderson's from *Windy McPherson's Son* to *Dark Laughter* has in it an undertone of rustic nostalgia. And in his latest book, *Hello Towns,* he is entirely concerned with rural things and rural people. More, the fact that Anderson himself deserted the city for the country and found in the editing of two country newspapers more joy, as he has said, than in any form of work he might do in the city, is but an additional evidence of his interests and affections.

While the philosophy of these writers might be called reactionary, in that it favors, and would go back to, the country instead of the city—in a civilization which has managed to progress mainly through the growth of cities—it cannot be said that it is without the spirit of revolt. The revolt may be reactionary, but it is revolt none the less. And it is revolt, reactionary and radical, that has sounded the dominant note in American literature in the last two decades, particularly since 1914. That date is important in American literature as the year in which the revolt in poetry began. Almost all the standard poetic forms, the epic, the ode, the sonnet, even the general theories prevalent in English poetry as to rhyme and rhythm, grew up out of feudal life and tradition. Its essential stress, in keeping with the character of the civilization, was upon regularity of form and rigidity of structure. Although on the stage, for instance, with the rise of the middle classes, revolt had early set in against such feudal standards as the aristocratic conception of tragedy and the doctrine of the three unities, poetry remained comparatively unassailed by the new milieu. If its substance changed, its structure did not. Even when Byron and Keats effected their anapestic and dactylic invasion, it was not so much in an attempt to revolt against the old form as it was an attempt to diversify and enrich it. To a certain extent, this delay in revolt was due to the fact that poetry depends more intimately upon tradition than does the stage or even the novel. Even in an age which was increasingly individualistic, then, the poet had to express his individualism in a most unindividualistic form. It is in America, however, where, with the frontier, individualism reached its most advanced stage, that the first revolt against the old poetic form is to be discovered. Walt Whitman is the great rebel. Now one of the most interesting aspects of Whitman's revolt is to be found in the disparity between the time of its appearance and time of its acceptance. Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* was published in 1855, but its influence upon American poetry is not to be detected until the twentieth century.

Whitman not only represented the spirit of democracy in his philosophy, but he also

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embodied the democratic spirit in his attack upon poetic form. His revolt conferred upon the individual the right to be an iconoclast in form as well as content. Great individualists such as Emerson and Carlyle sensed the significance of Whitman's revolt even in his own day, but the poets themselves did not awaken to its meaning until the twentieth century. The free-verse movement was a direct outgrowth of Whitman's influence. Of course, in another sense, it is a movement in itself, arising out of forces that along with the World War came to a sharp climax in and around the year 1914. Whitman primarily served as one of its early prophets. The free-verse insurgents, dividing themselves into various camps—expressionists, imagists, vorticists—and developing such intellectual leaders as Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell soon came to dominate the field of poetic creation. One poetic invention succeeded another, each more iconoclastic than its predecessor. Everything new and individualistic was extolled; everything old and formalistic was scorned. Harriet Monroe's *Poetry,* Margaret Anderson's *Little Review,* Ezra Pound's *Blast,* and a score of smaller magazines, among which *Secession, Broom,* and *S4N* should be remembered, provided new mediums for the expression of this new revolt. Free verse everywhere became the common practice. Vachel Lindsey, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Maxwell Bodenheim, "H. D.", Alfred Kreymborg—all became advocates of the new verse. Very soon this great revolt in poetry found an active counterpart in prose.

All the extremes to which this revolt ran and, to an extent, still runs, are to be traced to the struggle, grown desperate in the last two decades, of expressing individualism in philosophy in a world that is socialized beyond individualistic control. The artist in particular, whose individuality has been egged on to the point of idiosyncrasy in its struggle for survival, has felt this contradiction in its most devastating forms. Contemptuous now, in these days of chaos of the standards of the middle class, he has nevertheless absorbed as much of the philosophy of middle-class individualism which fits in so well with certain cravings of his temperament, as has the *entrepreneur.* While he would agree with Flaubert that "down with the bourgeoisie is the beginning of virtue" it is the morals of the bourgeoisie and not its individualistic doctrine that he finds such an anathema. That is why today, when individualism as a philosophy is threatened on all sides, and, as John Dewey says, we must prepare ourselves for adjustment in a world of corporate or collective economy, we have individualism in art running the gamut of every exaggeration and extreme. And what is even more important to note is that these exaggerations and extremes are to be found not only in literature but in every art.

Walt Whitman was not accepted until the twentieth century because the fight for individualistic expression in poetry had still been able to find its voice, for the most part, in the old forms. In the twentieth century that was no longer possible. New forces were at work in civilization, and still newer things had to be said. Democracy at last struck at poetic form, and the right of the individual artist to be a complete individualist in his art was established. Whitman's revolt against the old forms was succeeded by revolts so far-reaching that by the end of the second decade of the century we had poetry—and prose—so individualistic that its meaning was lost in the ultimately individual. The early release that this individualism got in the pages of *The Little Review* attains a kind of curious climax in the poetry of E. E. Cummings and the prose of Gertrude Stein. In these lines of Cummings, describing a goldfish, this individualistic extravagance is most obvious:

a: crimbflitteringish is arefloatsis ingfallall!
mill, shy milbrightlions
my (hurl flicker handful
in) dodging are shybrigHteyes is crum bs (alll)
if, ey Es.

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Gertrude Stein is certainly no less eccentric in her prose. Nor has James Joyce before, who is the greatest of these literary *sans-culottes*, steered very far away from this same kind of word-confusion in his most recent book: *Work in Progress*. In fact, around this latter work, so intense has been the controversy concerning it, a new school of ultra-individualistic critics has gathered. In their magazine, *transition*, which extended this individualistic revolt far beyond the point where *The Little Review* left it, they even went so far as to evolve a new theory of art in order to justify their work. In their Proclamation, which is already famous, they clearly stated that "the writer expresses; he does not communicate". This, when all is said, is the ultimate extent to which individualistic doctrine can run. All responsibility to the reader or onlooker is cancelled. Nothing but the individual artist matters. The inevitable tendency of such individualism is to create art objects, poems, novels, dramas, or paintings, that can only be understood by the individual artist who creates them. And that is why, as a final result of this revolt, we began to produce an art that was ingrown instead of expansive.

That the last stages of this revolt unmistakably represent the swift disintegration and decay of individualism in our day can scarcely be gainsaid. The words of Margaret Anderson—the editor of *The Little Review*, in which most modern American poets first found a voice—at the beginning of her book, *My Thirty Years' War*, "My greatest enemy is reality. I have fought it successfully for thirty years", supply an excellent cue as to what was happening in the minds of these writers. They feared reality because it was opposed to them. Reality was becoming less individualistic, while they, like vestiges lost on a sea, were anxious to become more individualistic in order to survive. Instead of fighting reality, however, in an effort to change it, they tried to deny it as a method of escape. Hence the absurd extremes to which such a revolt inevitably raced.

The nineteen-twenties, with the rapid changes in economic and social life that followed the World War, brought us to another stage in our literary history. While the individualistic emphasis was not destroyed, it took on a very different form. Henry L. Mencken became its critical embodiment. For a decade Mr. Mencken exercised an influence over American literature unparalleled by that of any other critic in this generation. Mr. Mencken is a successor to the so-called literary muck-rakers who sprang up in the early part of this century. While he did not —and still does not—represent in his revolt a philosophy of social reform such as did Upton Sinclair, Lincoln Steffens, David Graham Phillips and others of that school, he did represent revolt against the traditions of American criticism which were derived from the influence of William D. Howells and his professorial contemporaries. Mr. Mencken's philosophy, sharpened by the effects of the war, was without the optimisms and exciting faiths of the revoltés of the teens. Indeed, even while the poets of the new school were continuing to rise and win larger audiences, Mr. Mencken declared his contempt for poetry, which he described as a childish art. Theodore Dreiser, who has come closer than any other American writer to describing certain of the more obvious but formidable aspects of our industrial civilization, became Mr. Mencken's great inspiration. What Mr. Mencken saw in Dreiser, and that which made Dreiser an important figure in American literature for many other critics of that period, was that futilitarian philosophy which became a mood of the age in the decade following the war. The disillusionment of those days found its most vivid expression in cynicism rather than despair. Even gaiety began to revolve about the sneer. Beliefs were deserted, and values scorned. Sinclair Lewis's novels *Main Street, Babbitt,* and *Elmer Gantry* were part of that same literary sneer. Sherwood Anderson, but for a different reason as we noted before, saw only

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emptiness in our civilization. James Branch Cabell, in romantic escape to the imaginary realm of Poictesme which he invented as a special retreat, was still more cynical of values and beliefs. The works of Joseph Hergesheimer were also of that ilk. Even Eugene O'Neill, with all his excellent probings of character and plot, did not rise beyond that philosophy of life. His latest play, *Dynamo,* reveals that attitude in its most tragic form. The last of this group to gain influence is Ernest Hemingway, whose novels *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* portray ever so clearly the depths of disillusionment into which youth was plunged as a result of the war.

If we should call the period from 1914 to 1920 *the age of revolt* in modern American literature, we should then call the period of the twenties *the age of cynicism.* In this latter period, the stress was not upon values but upon the folly of them. The spirit of the age was destructive and not constructive. Its contributions were negative and not positive. In another form, it represented the debacle of individualism—as at its last debauch.

In the thirties today we are already confronted with a new tendency and the beginning of a new period. Mr. Mencken's influence has already waned, and the writers of his decade, with the exception of Hemingway, no longer dominate the literary scene. Changes in our economic life are already beginning to show their effects in our literature. As a consequence of these changes, we are facing now a new age—*an age of convictions.* Too much has happened in our history now for us to be content with the sneer. The *age of cynicism* is no longer able to meet the demands of our youth. Beliefs are needed again, and values that are social and not anarcho-individualistic. It is the need of formulating these new values that is rapidly becoming our chief concern. The success of Thornton Wilder on one side, and John Dos Passos and Michael Gold on another, is an evidence of the new era. In *The Woman of Andros,* Mr. Wilder is interested in finding a new set of values for our age. Paganism and Christianity are sifted in the process. T. S. Eliot, author of *The Waste Land* and the leading poet who has come out of America in this generation, is now convinced that "the greatest poets have been concerned with moral values". Mr. Dos Passos and Mr. Gold are interested in values of a different kind—but they are values just the same. The values that Mr. Eliot is interested in are religious values; the values that Mr. Dos Passos and Mr. Gold are interested in are radical values. This whole struggle finds a central point in the present controversy over *humanism.* Mr. Irving Babbitt and Mr. Paul Elmer More, the two leaders of American humanism, with the change in spirit of the age, have regained the position of influence which they had some years ago. The humanists are concerned with self-reform; the radicals are concerned with social reform. The humanists are conservative; their attitude toward man, toward government, toward labor, toward literature, is conservative. The radicals are revolutionary; their attitude toward man, toward government, toward labor, toward literature, is revolutionary. The humanists are individualistic; the radicals are collectivistic. Both sides, however, know what they are about; both sides have definite convictions. And this decade which, in contrast with the preceding one, has already given every omen of being an *age of convictions,* will provide the battle ground for this new conflict. Humanists and radicals alike insist upon bringing literature back to life, and of interpreting literary values in terms of life values. Those who continue in the tradition of the twenties, refusing to interpret literature in terms of life, and separating literary values from life values, will find their influence weakening as the decade advances.

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MINOR FICTION IN THE EIGHTIES

by Forrest Reid

A GREAT many novelists were busy in the eighties, so busy that with not a few two novels a year appears to have been the normal rate of production, and it is to be remembered that two novels then meant five volumes, more often six. I read a considerable number of these books long ago, so that they are now but the veriest phantoms floating in a mist of associations real and imaginary, the hour and the place—window seat or walled garden, river or seashore, winter fire or summer sun—often emerging in far more vivid detail than the author and his work. I do not know why I should find it so much easier to remember where and when I read this or that book than to remember (beyond a mere general sense of happiness or unhappiness and a few detached scenes and characters) its contents, but so it is. I was brought up in a house full of novels, most of them belonging to the seventies and eighties, and in my teens I read with an appetite not easily sated: moreover I read honestly, pronouncing the words and never skipping, so that I feel a great deal more should have remained than actually has. I read all the descriptions of sunsets provided so liberally and conscientiously by William Black. Unlike the descriptions of Thomas Hardy and Victor Hugo (in which I found a mysterious affinity) they created absolutely no impression on my mind because, I think, they had created very little upon his. Still I read them, though after three or four books I reached the conclusion that Black was not to be one of my authors, and for no better reason, I'm afraid, I have not included him in my present survey. I read all the moralizings provided by novelists with a "purpose" or a "problem", but there was less virtue here, "problem" novels possessing at that time a curious fascination for me.

It was in 1883 that Olive Schreiner, with *The Story of an African Farm*, produced what must have been among the earliest of these. That is to say, of the modern variety, for of course there had been the experiments of Charles Reade and Wilkie Collins. But it was *The Story of an African Farm* which paved the way for *The Yellow Aster*, *David Grieve*, and *The Heavenly Twins* of the nineties. Miss Schreiner, if she stood a little apart from the band of feminine novelists associated with the New Woman, nevertheless practically invented her. The Woman's Rights novel, the Religious Doubts novel, the Sex novel—seeds of all these were wafted from her farm in Africa to produce a variegated crop of fictions bearing such titles, disconsolate or provocative, as *A Superfluous Woman*, *A Sunless Heart*, *The Woman Who Did*—works widely discussed at the time and which it would be difficult by any effort of imagination to reanimate today. As novels the interest they excited was violent and brief. They annoyed Andrew Lang; they gained the sympathy if not the admiration

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of Thomas Hardy; they left the small esthetic camp indifferent. And of them all, *The Story of an African Farm* alone survives, because of the fervor behind it. It is not a book to be re-read. Even in the eighties its appeal must have been mainly to youthful readers, with whom the generosity of its spirit would outweigh crudities of form and characterization. To myself the book appealed profoundly, and in an ancient copy lying on the table before me quite a jungle of marked passages remains to show me where I was moved—if not, alas, to show me why. My favorite chapter must have been that containing the allegory of the Hunter and Truth, since this is pencilled from beginning to end, while Lyndall's dissertations on the rights and wrongs of women get not a single mark.

In fairness, it must be granted to the author that her story created the state of mind most likely to prove receptive to her "message". There was art in it—or possibly I should say inspiration—but the book was not conceived as a work of art. It was an indictment, a sermon, a confession of faith, an appeal for justice, anything you like but a work of art, and as it stands it is an odd mixture of caricature and reality. Bonaparte Blenkins, the serio-comic villain, is not a real man; he bears, in fact, though sadly degenerated, a distinct resemblance to Mr. Punch: Waldo—my own dear Waldo—is not a real boy; and Lyndall, I am afraid, though she was the author's darling, is not a real girl. What is real is Olive Schreiner, and where she identifies herself with her characters the fundamental feelings ring true. The humanity of the book is unmistakable. The author packed between its covers everything she had to say: she was not afraid to let herself go, not afraid to gush; it was all infinitely more personal, infinitely more confidential than most autobiographies.

So far as I am aware it struck a completely new note. I think it was George Meredith who read and accepted the manuscript for Messrs. Chapman and Hall, but it certainly was not because he saw in Miss Schreiner a disciple. As a matter of fact, to accept *The Story of an African Farm* showed courage; even more than had been displayed by James Payn when he read and refused *John Inglesant*. The book reflected a new spirit which had begun to manifest itself among serious novelists but which so far had received scant encouragement from their critics. It was before everything a book of revolt, a demand for freedom, though all that Olive Schreiner herself was interested in was the social question.

In other quarters the demand for freedom was based on esthetic grounds. The novelist felt himself to be hampered: there were subjects of profound interest he was only allowed to treat dishonestly, if at all. There arose a clamor for what a character in one of Henry James's stories calls "the larger latitude". The ironic little masterpiece in question, *The Death of the Lion*, was perhaps rather cruel, since it must have been difficult not to associate Guy Walsingham the author of "Obsessions", with a lady who, also writing under a masculine pen-name, had attracted a good deal of attention just then. Both *Keynotes* and *Discords*, though I have read neither, I suspect to be experiments in "the larger latitude"—which phase, I need scarcely add, means latitude to write with frankness of the relations of the sexes. It was bitterly opposed, and among the most acrimonious of the opposers were several of our novelists themselves, notably Mrs. Oliphant, who attacked the later tales of Thomas Hardy with a virulence that leaves us gaping. Still more amazingly, Wilkie Collins had contrived to offend the innocents. There would be little point in reviving these ineptitudes were they not the outward and visible signs of a widespread spiritual prudery. An editorial note which appeared in *The Graphic* for January 30, 1875, reveals the remarkable state of mind that had been created by an attitude of excessive moral vigilance:

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In last week's instalment of *The Law and the Lady* the following paragraph, which occurs on page 83, column 2, was printed thus:—"He caught my hand in his and covered it with kisses. In the indignation of the moment I cried out for help." In the author's proof the passage stood as follows:—"He caught my hand in his, and devoured it with kisses. His lips burnt me like fire. He twisted himself suddenly in the chair, and wound his arm round my waist. In the terror and indignation of the moment, vainly struggling with him, I cried out for help." The editor of this journal suppressed a portion of the paragraph on the ground that the description as originally given was objectionable. Mr. Wilkie Collins having since informed us, through his legal advisers, that, according to the terms of his agreement with the proprietors of *The Graphic*, his proofs are to be published *verbatim* from his ms., the passage in question is here given in its original form.

One up to Wilkie! we may think, but this was not to be the last word. Our editor perfectly foresaw his opportunity and, sure enough, when *The Law and the Lady* had run its course as a serial and was issued in three volumes, *The Graphic,* instead of the customary review, beneath the title of the work simply printed an apology to its readers for having provided them with a tale the true nature of which had only been discovered after its first chapters were in print. Possibly the apology was sincere; possibly moral feelings really were wounded; in any case it was inevitable that a point of view so narrow, so stupid, should lead to a reaction, and in the eighties the backward—or forward—sweep of the pendulum had begun. Quite apart from *The Story of an African Farm* and its New Morality, the early novels of George Moore and George Gissing were experiments in naturalism. True, in the case of Gissing there was to be no tampering with the proprieties, and even the naturalism remained far from unqualified. But George Moore showed a less conciliatory spirit, and in his very first story, *A Modern Lover*, published in 1883, through the mouth of Harding the novelist he produced his manifesto: "We do not always choose what you call unpleasant subjects, but we try to go to the roots of things; and the basis of life, being material and not spiritual, the analyst inevitably finds himself, sooner or later, handling what this sentimental age calls coarse".

Gissing, I think, never handled what any age, however sentimental, could call coarse, but he had a passion for the sordid (founded on dislike), and even when it was not necessarily in his subject a kind of flatness of his style produced a drab and dispiriting effect. The novels are devoid of charm, and the monotonously despondent tone somehow suggests a low vitality. Behind them is neither a lyrical nor a dramatic impulse, nor the impulse of the born story-teller. It is work we must respect; he never wrote a cheap nor an insincere passage; but in all these novels of middle-class life I cannot recall a single beautiful line. And it is not because of the subject. In the slum scenes of *The Princess Cassamassima* Henry James used material quite as sordid, but there was joy in the making of the book and his genius infused its darkest pages with the spirit of life and beauty. The value and meaning of a subject obviously must vary with what we bring to it, and it seems to me that Gissing brought little beyond the knowledge of the historian and the student of social problems. His incidents are presented in a curiously muffled fashion; there is never a sharp detonation. Moreover, he never really learned the technique of naturalism; in his method he was anything but an innovator:

> She proceeded to eat a supper scarcely less substantial than that which had appeased her brother's appetite. Start not, dear reader; Alice is only a subordinate heroine.

> Oh, the gravity of conviction in a white-souled English girl of eighteen! Do you not hear her say these words?

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He does not realize that it is just such tiresome little apostrophes that prevent us from hearing her. I must confess that it seems to me odd that Gissing's desire to write a realistic novel should have carried him no further than it did, that his experiments should have stopped short with the matter, leaving the manner to look after itself. There were models with which he must have been acquainted. Whether one approved of the story or not, surely it was plain that the method of *Madame Bovary* had a good deal to do with its extraordinary effect of reality, and whether one liked that method or not, surely it proved the advantage of possessing a method. But whatever other changes were taking place in the fiction of the eighties, whatever other activities were astir, except in the work of Henry James and George Moore the technique of the novel remained practically stationary. The authors' annoying "asides" continued to come crashing through the illusion like stones through a sheet of glass. And sometimes these "asides" extended for pages. Only too frequently, indeed, in the average novel of the period, they were there for no other reason than that they *did* extend for pages, and so helped to fill out the compulsory three volumes. Lengthy discussions (dialogue only by courtesy) fulfilled a similar purpose.

The three-volume convention was a disaster. Most of the novels of the eighties are too long. Even where he does not quite shamelessly resort to padding we see the author deliberately slackening his pace because he must not reach the end too soon. And the faults we find in the lesser writers are present also in the works of the masters. If there is less genius in the novel of today, I think we may claim that there is more science. And the writing is less stilted. The moderns I dare say err on the other side, but let me give an example of what I mean. One of the chief merits of the novels of Rhoda Broughton is the vivacity of the dialogue, but re-read a page of that dialogue merely changing "have not I?" and "do not you?" to "haven't I?" and "don't you?", and note the result: the actual sound of the voices immediately begins to reach us. After making allowance for the modifications that must have taken place in our speech, I think it will hardly be denied that in the average modern novel the writing is more flexible than it was in the eighties, that the novel itself contains less surplusage; that it does, in short, show an advance in craftsmanship. True, the question instantly suggests itself—Does the average novel either of the eighties or the nineteen-thirties matter? And if not, what is the position? In the eighties Henry James, Hardy, Meredith and Stevenson were all writing, while from America came several brilliant and charming novels by W. D. Howells, and at least one masterpiece, *Huckleberry Finn*.

Looking back across the stretch of half a century we can, for our present purpose, see our novels and novelists divided into groups or schools—the realistic, the romantic, the pastoral. On the other hand when we come to consider the more outstanding works with an idea of seeking relationships with the past or future, our time-scheme presents an oddly broken line. Thus, though it is not fanciful, perhaps, to point to a relationship between W. H. Mallock's *The New Republic*, published in 1877, and Mr. Aldous Huxley's *Crome Yellow*, published in 1921, what have we in between? Casting backward from *The New Republic* we arrive at *Headlong Hall* and *Nightmare Abbey*, which constitute, I suppose, the fountain-head. Again, Baring-Gould's *Mehalah* has nothing in common with the rural tales of Thomas Hardy, but much in common with *Wuthering Heights*. *John Inglesant* may have derived something from *Henry Esmond*, but the historical romances of Stanley Weyman, "Q," and Conan Doyle owe far more to the tales of Dumas than to *The Cloister and the Hearth*; while one of the most brilliant books of our whole decade, one of the least

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popular and at the same time most likely to survive, Richard Garnett's *The Twilight of the Gods*, goes straight back to *Vathek*. As for the modern mystery story, how can we compare it with *The Moonstone* or *The Woman in White*? And still less is it comparable with the tales of the Irish novelist, Sheridan Le Fanu, that so strangely underestimated writer whose work at its best has a streak of genius running through it and hovers on the edge of a rather dreadful kind of poetry.

Probably the most popular novels of the late eighties and early nineties were the romances. I do not include *John Inglesant* among them, because, though it certainly was popular and a romance, it was essentially a spiritual confession, a novel of ideas, very nearly as much so as *Marius the Epicurean*, and spirituality is hardly the distinguishing quality of *King Solomon's Mines*, *Dead Man's Rock*, *A Gentleman of France*, or *The White Company*. It was, I venture to say, Andrew Lang who to a large extent created the vogue of the romantic school. For Lang could make a reputation, or at any rate sell an edition, in a way no critic can today. And he loved these books—loved them so well that they seem to have had the power to blunt his critical faculty, which could be fastidious enough in other directions. I remember reading a novel by Hume Nisbet, dedicated to Lang "by special permission", and which struck me even at the age of fourteen as a little crude. The comic passages—as is usually the case—were particularly excruciating, and Lang, whose own humor was so charming, must have loathed them. Still he would have these books, and nobody dared to contradict him. His prestige, his learning, his wit and his irony, were too formidable; in the heyday of his influence not a voice was raised in revolt, and even timid disagreements were larded with compliments.

Lang could be generous when it pleased him. He wrote charmingly of Rhoda Broughton, with a graceful half affectionate playfulness which conveyed at the same time a perfect appreciation of her talent. Yet (and it might be in the same article), he would ridicule a tale of Tolstoy's without having troubled to read it, describe *Esther Waters* as the unfortunate production of an Irishman without humor, and dismiss Hardy's *Tess* in a tone of magnanimity that must have been infuriating. He infuriated Henry James, though he had praised *Washington Square* and had done Miss Annie P., or Daisy Miller, the honor of bringing her into his delightful book of epistolary parodies, *Old Friends*. But it was the early James Lang liked, the James who, largely on the strength of *Daisy Miller*, actually for a few years achieved popularity. If he disapproved of the subject of a book or the point of view of a writer, no sincerity, no subtlety of treatment could win his praise, while if the subject were to his taste he could tolerate almost any treatment. On the other hand, when both subject and form pleased him—then, even in the case of such exotic writers as Edgar Poe and Gérard de Nerval, he became the most sensitive and sympathetic of critics. But he was whimsical, Puckish, sometimes not without a hint of cruelty in his wit, and his taste in fiction remained to the end the taste of a schoolboy who is good at games.

Whether we attribute it to "freakishness" or to an odd insensibility, with the solitary exception of Stevenson, the more important novelists of his generation had very little for which to thank Lang. Even his appreciation of Rhoda Broughton's work we cannot help suspecting to be in part at least due to friendship. Elsewhere he shows not the slightest sympathy with her kind of novel. His treatment of it is to play with it like a cat with a mouse, giving delicate but painful taps at the style, plot and characters, before the final pounce that finishes it off. But for Rhoda Broughton he reserved another method. Miss Broughton did not, we are told, in conversation at all events,

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take her novels very seriously, and this in itself would appeal to Lang. That she must have taken them seriously in one sense, however—that of being profoundly moved by what she was writing at the time of writing—is obvious. The emotion behind them must have been genuine since it still lives. She founded her own school and carried it on through the seventies and eighties—the school that is, for me at least, permanently associated with "Bentley's Favourite Novels", fat dark green books, the contents of which usually first had been serialized in *Temple Bar*. I once planned to read them all, and I think must have come pretty near to succeeding.

In the Bentley tradition, after *Not Wisely But Too Well* and *Cometh Up as a Flower*, Rhoda Broughton had it very much her own way till the late eighties, when Miss Corelli was admitted to the fold, and promptly upset everything, capturing the public by the irresistible baits of melodrama and an occultism that smacked of the Egyptian Hall. Rhoda Broughton's popularity had distinctly waned when in 1890 she published *Alas!*, though she still, in that novel, kept to the manner which had made her famous. In *Belinda*, which belongs to 1883, she had to my mind reached the highest point of her attainment. She had been writing then for seventeen years, and without losing any of her early zest had acquired more restraint. The love scenes in *Belinda* have all the old power, but it is now under firmer control, and her wit and humor, I think, are more abundantly in evidence here than in any other of the tales. The interest of *Belinda*, as indeed of all the novels of her first period, is frankly and almost exclusively erotic, but it is clean and healthy, and the passion does come through; there are no young women in fiction more genuinely in love than Rhoda Broughton's. What they experience, I admit, is largely an infatuation of the senses, and only a physical infatuation, I suppose, could work the physical havoc which brings more than one of these heroines to an early grave. The heroes are of tougher fibre; they survive all right—superb animals, glorious in strength if ugly in feature. This worship of brawn is carried to a point where to the weakling it may become on occasion just the least bit trying. The male whose interests are intellectual is so exclusively used as a foil to some Herculean numskull. We see him wrapped in overcoats and mufflers, an umbrella tucked under his arm, and galoshes on his large flat feet. There is something ruthless in the way the physical infirmities of Belinda's husband, Professor Forth, are kept before us. They acquire in the end a kind of moral quality, become a part of the general despicableness of his character—its meanness, selfishness, joylessness and narrow-mindedness. For not only is the intellectual male usually depicted as unsound in wind and limb, but he is also denied any compensating graciousness of manner, and above all his loves are as feeble as his muscles. Not for him splendid, reckless passions, and it is by his capacity for experiencing an overwhelming passion that man in these novels is judged. True, in the tales of her second period Rhoda Broughton worked gradually away from this point of view (her sense of humor was so strong that this perhaps was inevitable once the emotional impulse had begun to die down), but in the earlier, and to my mind distinctly superior, novels the hero, whatever the hue of his moral character, whether he have the black reputation of Colonel Stamer (in *Not Wisely But Too Well*) or the innocent record of "a non-reading, hard-rowing, footballing, cricketing" youth like David Rivers, Belinda's lover—the hero, whatever his moral feelings may be, must be endowed with two transcendent physical qualities, a superb body and a capacity for fierce and devouring passion.

Miss Broughton's attitude in all this, if perfectly comprehensible, is none the less unusual—unusual, that is to say, in its outspokenness. And if today we find in her

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love scenes a remarkable abandon, what effect were they likely to have produced on readers of the eighties, accustomed to heroines of an angelic modesty and decorum? The books were read and adored, but they were also banned and banished as coarse and unmaidenly. They were not actually "wicked"—"wickedness" was reserved for Ouida, and naturally there were no "brown, painted harlots" in Miss Broughton's pictures of county society; but she was all the more dangerous because her characters were human. "I began my career as Zola," she remarked in her old age to Mr. Percy Lubbock. "I finish it as Miss Yonge. It's not I that have changed, it's my fellow-countrymen."

Rhoda Broughton had little sense of style and her habit of writing in the historic present was not without its inconveniences; but her books had the warmth of life in them and their success was deserved. Moreover, considering the narrow range of subject, the variety we find in these for the most part tragic love dramas is surprising. It springs from the fact that the love motive is felt so intensely that fresh incidents and situations have never to be sought for, but spring up spontaneously in the writer's imagination. Nothing quite like these books had been done before, though only too much was done afterwards, one of the most popular imitations, *Comin' Thro' the Rye*, on its first appearance, anonymously, being actually attributed to Rhoda. The irrepressible F. C. Burnand parodied her in *Punch*, and his burlesque novel (*Gone Wrong*, by Miss Rhody Dendron) later appeared in book form with a cover design by Linley Sambourne. To *Punch*, also, Du Maurier contributed portraits of "splendid ugly men". And these are jests of honor, tributes to her popularity. The novels are not in the least absurd, and the reader today will laugh and cry in the right places.

The best comment on her own early fictions Miss Broughton supplied herself when an old woman (she died in 1920). So, at any rate, I take her last story, *A Fool in Her Folly*, to be. In this posthumous tale it seems to me she deliberately showed the other side of the medal. Surely there have crept some memories from the past into her half satiric, half sympathetic portrait of Charlotte. It is just such a novel as *Not Wisely But Too Well* that Charlotte in her enthusiastic innocence embarks upon, and the manuscript of which so shocks her parents that they burn it, and she has to write it all over again from memory. "Love" is the title of Charlotte's work, a volcanic love her theme, and her hero a dark, passion-scarred man. This hero, when half way through the second version of her novel, she meets in the flesh. Bill Drinkwater is Colonel Stamer of *Not Wisely But Too Well* reduced to reality. Like Stamer, like the hero of Charlotte's own novel, Bill is a black sheep, but there is this important difference in Miss Broughton's new presentment of the type, that his failings are no longer veiled in a romantic glamour, but particularized. Bill was expelled from Eton; a similar result followed when he was sent to an Army tutor in Yorkshire; and his later career has been marked by a trail of unsavory episodes. Upon Charlotte, however, the true significance of these vulgar little affairs is lost. She bathes her lover in the transforming light of imagination and through his passion for her sees him achieving redemption. Alas, this time the sheep really is black; so far from ennobling her hero, poor Charlotte, having kept a tryst with him at a lonely shanty on the Downs, narrowly escapes a worse misfortune than the disillusionment in which her grand passion ends.

"Rhoda," says Mr. Percy Lubbock, "to the end of her life, wore an air of the eighteen-seventies. Myself I have seen her, a generation later, with a trailing gown and a parasol and a croquet-mallet, contriving to wield all three at once with effect; and though it was difficult to think that she was the creator of her gushing Joans and Nancies and Be-

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lindas, she evidently came to us from their time and place; and if she hadn't written her novels she had lived in them, in that high-coloured England of big houses and big meals and big families." Certainly the big houses and big meals and big families form part of the charm of the novels. The very appearance of these, with their steel-engraved frontispieces, carries us back to a more homely, more leisurely, mellower age. I can myself, or so I fancy, recall it—not dimly, but brokenly—in such isolated pictures as impress themselves usually quite inexplicably on a child's mind; for that age died slowly, and more slowly I dare say in Ireland than in England. There are no crinolines in my pictures (nor for that matter in Rhoda's), which are of the mid-eighties, but there are crinolettes and parasols and spotted veils and small toque-like hats and trailing gowns, all in my mind still inextricably bound up with earliest visions of feminine beauty; and it was thus that Miss Broughton's heroines were attired. I confess I admire them. I admire the world they lived in. If I could I would sweep away nearly every invention of the intervening years—motor-cars, wireless, aeroplanes, movies, talkies, retaining only the guileless gramophone, and even that I would sacrifice to be rid of the rest. The frontispieces to the novels seem to me charming; I have an affection for big houses, while anyone who has been brought up in one must know that big families are the best. Miss Broughton's is the "county" world, and I like that too. Probably there are London scenes in her books but I do not remember them; for me the novels have a countrified and familiar aspect I would gladly linger over.

The career of W. E. Norris began thirteen years later than that of Rhoda Broughton. There were no novels by Norris in our house, and I have forgotten how I procured *Miss Shafto, A Bachelor's Blunder, Major and Minor* and the rest. But they were in Bentley's list, and for me that was sufficient; never can a publisher have inspired greater faith. Here there can be no doubt about origins: whatever value we may set on the achievement, it is plain that Norris got his idea of the novel from Thackeray. His fiction is the fiction of a man of the world, well-bred, detached, not taking himself or his work overseriously, deploring, rather, any emphatic display of emotion; amused, at times mildly cynical, but always kindly. He tells a story, of course, but it is as little startling as he can make it and there is only just enough of it to hold together an easy-going comedy of manners. Norris does not invariably end his fable with a wedding, but tragedy is as little in his line as mystery or melodrama. What he chiefly relies on is his lightness of touch, and this is particularly happy in his drawing of those idle, clever young good-for-nothings, who constitute by far the most amusing portraits in his gallery. We cannot call them heroes, these young gentlemen of expensive tastes and slender, if any, means, whose engaging imperturbability and deplorable morals enliven the pages of Norris's best novels. Probably they really are villains, for they live by their wits and on their friends—sometimes, alas, their friends of the opposite sex. Moreover they are utterly selfish; their intelligence, their wit and their graces of person and manner being employed solely to gain their own disreputable ends. In spite of this, the charm they exercise upon long-suffering relatives and friends is completely convincing, because we feel it ourselves. They have a playful, ironic humor which passes easily into insolence when nothing is to be gained by politeness. On the other hand, they never indulge in self-pity, never whine when misfortune overtakes them, never lose their composure in the most trying circumstances. They take risks and abide by their luck. They are not in the end allowed to triumph, but even when detected and exposed they have a delightful habit of leaving the virtuous both looking and feeling extremely foolish.

Philip, in *No New Thing*, whose fortunes we follow from early boyhood till his mar-

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riage with Signora Tommasini, the great operatic contralto, fat, *passée*, good-natured, nearly old enough to be his grandmother, but with heaps of money, is a typical Norris youth. His career is little more edifying than that of Mr. George Moore's "modern lover", but then he is so much more tolerable as a man, and so infinitely more amusing as a companion. We feel his attractiveness, whereas we have to take Lewis Seymour's for granted, since it depends apparently entirely on his good looks.

Norris wrote, however, with an always dangerous and eventually disastrous facility. Possibly the rate of his production did not exceed that of Anthony Trollope, but his range was very much narrower and his talent far less robust. He never lost a certain grace of manner, but he forced his gift and his early liveliness failed under the strain of over-production. *Thirlby Hall, The Rogue, Adrian Vidal, No New Thing*—he wrote, I dare say, a score of novels as good or nearly as good as these, and perhaps another score that do not fall immeasurably below them, but the four I have mentioned contain everything that will be found in the rest. They are, I suppose, what used to be described as "society novels". For the more familiar picture of English middle-class life we may turn to F. Anstey's two serious novels, *The Giant's Robe* and *The Pariah*.

Or rather to one of them, for though *The Giant's Robe* has some delightful humor and a tragic and exciting plot, it is of the later book I really wish to speak, tragic and enthralling also, but with a tragedy more subtle and a plot less in evidence. *The Pariah* is an admirable novel, standing far above the average fiction of both its day and ours, far too good to be forgotten. The portrait of Allen Chadwick, the loutish, undersized, uneducated, uncomely, cockney youth, who wakes up one day to find himself a rich man's son, is a delicate and beautiful study, to some extent anticipating that of Kipp. But all the circumstances of the story are different, and Allen's temperament is less adaptable and more sensitive. He is transplanted in an environment where he is disliked and looked down upon; blundering, by no means clever the innate kindness and generosity of his nature are belied at every turn by his unfortunate speech, manner and appearance. Hectored and bullied by a coarse-grained father (who desires to make a gentleman of him while not understanding very clearly what a gentleman is, and to this end has married an aristocratic but impecunious widow who, with an eye to the advancement of her own brood is careful, beneath a veil of apparent sympathy, to keep her stepson's shortcomings constantly in view), despised and disliked by his stepbrothers and sisters, Allen in the end is turned adrift; the cuckoo tactics succeed; the pariah is eliminated. The tragedy is quiet, with from the first a kind of hopelessness in it; and for all its pathos there is never a false note of sentimentality. I do not know that the novel attracted any particular attention. It was not what was expected, and therefore probably aroused disappointment. Mr. Anstey had the bad luck to write in his first story a book which was ever afterwards to be associated with his name, so that no matter what new ground he broke up, to the public he remained and still remains the author of *Vice-Versa*. I can think of no other explanation for the neglect of his later books. After all, *Tourmalin's Time Cheques* is quite as original and amusing as *Vice-Versa*. So are *Under the Rose*, *The Travelling Companions*, and all that series of stories in scene and dialogue beginning with *Voces Populi* and ending with *Lyre and Lancet*.

With the exceptions of those two masterpieces, *The New Arabian Nights* and *The Twilight of the Gods*, Mr. Anstey's are the only experiments in the fantastic I can recall belonging to the eighties. *Vice-Versa, The Tinted Venus, A Fallen Idol, Tourmalin's Time Cheques*—these endearing tales, in which the quaintness of the situations is exquisitely opposed to the realism of the talk

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and characterization, act upon one's spirits like sunshine upon a barometer. They are true flowers of the comic genius, and each is, into the bargain, the work of a born story-teller. Observation, invention, an exquisite sense of human absurdity, and a gift for writing dialogue with a mimetic skill that creates the very illusion of the speaking voice —all these qualities have kept them as fresh today as when they were first presented to the reading world.

In the pastoral novel, close to the soil, we breathe the very smell of England. Here, in the works of Thomas Hardy, we find the English genius, a little earthy perhaps, but spontaneous, strong, triumphant, in its supreme gift of poetry. And in the work of those less famous writers with whom I am alone concerned, there is an equally strong local flavor. There are flashes of poetry in the novels of Richard Jefferies, *Greene Ferne Farm*, *Amaryllis at the Fair*, *The Dewy Morn*, though all three are failures. Jefferies, in truth, apart from his power of description, was but poorly equipped as a novelist. He had little gift for creating character, little inventive power, little sense of construction, and his technique was more artless even than that of most of his contemporaries. He wrote one masterpiece, *Bevis*; but *Bevis* was a book about boys, a dream of his own boyhood, everything in which sprang from memory, a love of nature, and an inexhaustible joy and patience in noting the details of the natural scene. And even *Bevis* he did his best to spoil by the last chapters. But it seems to me to be the best book about boys ever written, with the possible exception of *Huckleberry Finn*: in fact, in its own line, I believe it to be unsurpassable. At the same time I feel much less certain that it is the best boys' book.

It was the only story Jefferies ever wrote into which he was able to put his whole heart. He was far more interested in the building of the raft, the exploration of the lake, the lessons in swimming and sailing, than in the love business of his grown-up fictions. *Greene Ferne Farm*, published in 1880, is typical of these. It is a short novel, less than three hundred pages of big print; it contains a few beautiful passages and two or three good chapters; but Jefferies's individual note, the note that is carried so delightfully right through *Bevis*, sounds only intermittently.

> Mr. Ruck, very big and burly, was shaped something like one of his own mangolds turned upside down: that is to say, as the glance ran over his figure, beginning at the head, it took in a swelling outline as it proceeded lower. He was clad in a snowy-white smock-frock, breeches and gaiters, and glossy beaver hat.
>
> This costume had a hieroglyphic meaning. The snowy-white smock-frock intimated that he had risen from lowly estate, and was proud of the fact. The breeches and gaiters gave him an air of respectable antiquity in itself equivalent to a certain standing. Finally the beaver hat—which everybody in the parish knew cost a guinea, and nothing less—bespoke the thousand pounds at the bank to which he so frequently alluded.
>
> "Hur be a upstanding girl, that Margaret Estcourt. A' got a thousand pound under the will."
>
> "And the Greene Ferne Farm when the widder goes."
>
> "Five hundred acres freehold, and them housen in the town."
>
> "A' be a featish-looking girl, you."
>
> "So be May Fisher; but a' bean't such a queen as t'other. Margaret walks as if the parish belonged to her."
>
> "If a' did, her would sell un, and buy a new bonnet. . . ."
>
> The sound of singing came from the open door under the tower hard by.
>
> "Dall'd if it bean't 'I will arise.'"
>
> "'S'pose us had better go in."

In such passages can we not hear the echo of another voice, that of the author of *Under the Greenwood Tree*? Those chapters, too, in which Margaret and Geoffrey, the undeclared lovers, are lost on the Downs at night, might

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have been conceived by Hardy. They find shelter in an ancient tomb or dolmen, and possibly it is this which recalls the scene, written more than ten years later, where Angel Clare and Tess flee from justice across Salisbury Plain. True, no cloud of doom hangs over Jefferies's lovers, no ironical President of the Immortals makes sport of them; it is only that both scenes impress upon us the same sense of a vast lonely space and of immemorial time in contrast with the pitiful fragility of human lives.

In the same year, 1880, there had appeared a much more remarkable novel of rural life. Baring-Gould's half-forgotten tale, *Mehalah*, if not a great book is at least a memorable one. It would be memorable if for nothing else than that the author of it is, I suppose, Emily Brontë's only disciple. In its subject, in its principal characters, in its conception of love as a kind of spiritual or demoniac obsession, in its violence, in its wild and lonely setting, *Mehalah* inevitably reminds us of *Wuthering Heights*. The likeness, indeed, if it forms part of the book's fascination is also its misfortune. *Mehalah* is powerfully written; set it among any group of novels of the better class and it will stand out as a bold, striking and picturesque work; the one comparison it cannot survive is the comparison it forces us to make.

On its own plane, however, *Mehalah* is worthy to survive. The time is 1780 or thereabouts, the scene the glittering, desolate Essex salt marshes, the subject a passionate and unrequited love. How far Elijah Rebow, consciously or unconsciously, may have been derived from Heathcliff does not matter. He never appears to us as a kind of dark fallen angel (and how far that aspect depended on the fact that Emily Brontë was in love with her hero it would be useless to seek, though one can guess that under a certain type of examination he would emerge as the projection of a repression). Rebow, if he was suggested by Heathcliff, nevertheless is not Heathcliff: much less is Mehalah Catherine Earnshaw; and the author's realization of his characters remains throughout clear and consistent. Rebow is as violent and ruthless as Heathcliff, as constant in his love, while the passion that consumes him is as absorbing and as clean as Heathcliff's, spiritualized, one might think, by its very intensity. He rants at times, but so does Heathcliff. Both are ready to commit any action that may bring them nearer to their heart's desire; both are revengeful, implacable and in most directions unscrupulous. And Mehalah is Rebow's soul-mate as Cathy is Heathcliff's. But a sharp divergence here is given to the march of the drama, for Mehalah hates and defies Rebow, and loves the worthless, easy-going George. To get the girl into his power Rebow sticks at nothing. He betrays Mehala's lover to the press gang, robs her and her widowed mother, plots against them, buys up their impoverished farm, burns the house down over their heads and finally, by lying, scheming, and violence, gets them beneath his own roof at Red Hall. This gaunt red-brick house, standing bare and bleak and lonely above the level of the marsh, without a tree to shelter it, and where, in the cellars under the paved floor, Rebow keeps his maniac brother chained like a wild beast —this house is in itself a Brontë conception. The whole theme of the book might well have scared off anybody but a Brontë, and by what miracle it escapes melodrama I do not know. That it does escape it, however, is I think unquestionable. And the story unrolls itself before us against a background of water and sky. The smell of the sea is in it, the brown salt weed drying on the flats, the sound of oars and of boats being launched and beached, the cry of wild duck and curlew, now and then the report of a gun; and though it is not a tale of smugglers and we are not told of a single cargo that is run, smuggling somehow is going on all round us.

Mehalah was a rather odd book for a parson to have written, even though he did not intend to sign it. Where rustic religion is

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concerned the tone if not cynical is completely disillusioned:

> Mrs. de Wit was a moralist, and when nearly drunk religious.
>
> "I always make a point to believe the worst. I'm a religious person, and them as sets up to be religious always does that."
>
> The "dearly beloveds" met in the Lord's house every Lord's day to acknowledge their "erring and straying like lost sheep," and make appointments for erring and straying again.

There is not the slightest attempt to point a moral, to preach or to pray. The attitude to women is to say the least unflattering, and such an episode as that of the curate's children and the bat is in the spirit if not the manner of Mr. T. F. Powys.

Just one more book I should like to mention because it has never, I think, met with anything like the appreciation it deserves. It was published in 1887, appearing first anonymously in *Temple Bar*, and then in a single slender dark blue volume. (I am ending up, you see, fittingly if quite unintentionally, with yet another Bentley book:—"that wise old publisher", as Miss Corelli called him when he accepted *A Romance of Two Worlds*.) *A Village Tragedy*, by Margaret L. Woods, is a realistic pastoral novel, but it is a work of infinite delicacy, written in a simple lucid prose that is in itself a joy, rare then and rare today. The tragic plot is simple as the writing, the characters lowly (the hero almost inarticulate), but in spite of its gloomy shadows there is a beauty in this love tale that approaches the idyllic. Beauty and sadness alike spring in some measure from the youth of the lovers, their pathetic inexperience if not innocency, for Annie and Jesse are really little more than children when they are thrown into each other's arms—Annie the farm drudge, and Jesse the workhouse boy, now working on a farm too. The disaster is not of their making; it is the result of the cruelty, prurience and stupidity of their elders, for there has been nothing but friendship between them when the girl in the middle of the night is dragged out of bed and thrust out of doors by her suspicious and half-drunken aunt and mistress. She seeks shelter, naturally enough, in the boy's cottage; but it is an unfortunate step, and her aunt sees to it that it shall be irretrievable. It may be objected that in the misinformation that prevents Annie and Jesse from getting married, in Jesse's long illness, and in the railway accident which kills him just when at last there seems to be a chance of happiness, there is a hint of the arbitrary. Still, the little book remains of a rare distinction, and takes rank amongst our very finest pastoral novels.

Like *Mehalah,* it is among those that should, if out of print, be reprinted. *A Village Tragedy*, *The Pariah*, *Mehalah*—if I were re-issuing a selection of novels of the eighties I should begin with these three. But I should not end there: there are others—at least a score—whose ghosts would haunt me reproachfully if I did. Fifty years! A man considers himself only middle-aged at fifty, yet for a book it is far beyond the allotted span. The thought might well awaken in the most self-confident author a mood of chastened melancholy. Luckily youth is untroubled with such thoughts or I dare say nobody would think it worth the trouble to begin to write, which would be a pity. It is only when we see the books we ourselves have once so enjoyed—or perhaps even written—dropping into oblivion, that a spirit of tenderness towards the past is aroused. Let us cultivate it, without neglecting the present. It may one day—who knows?—breathe some faint friendly whisper among our own dry bones.

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THE MEANING OF ROUSSEAU

by Robert Shafer

"It was high time we had a reasonable book about Rousseau!" exclaimed an English reviewer, not long ago, and proceeded to hail Professor Wright's small volume* as meeting this requirement "admirably". This was something for Morningside Heights; and something, even more, for Professor Wright. And no one, surely, can read his book without admiration for its form. It is the result of much study, patient analysis, long meditation—yet it is brief, simple, clear, and goes to the center of those perennial and supremely important questions which Rousseau attempted to answer. It is, too, a book of honest purpose, the more persuasive just because one is constantly made to feel that its author did, in the first instance, attempt to approach his vexed subject dispassionately and without prejudice.

Moreover, no one is likely to question the need of such a treatise as Professor Wright has aimed at. His purpose is simply to tell us what Rousseau meant to say, as "a long perusal of his work" has led him to understand Rousseau's real intention. That this should be still a deeply unsettled problem, a century and a half after the Genevan's death, may be sufficiently odd, and disturbing, but will not be doubted by anyone at all familiar with Rousseau's books, with the vast body of criticism which has grown up around them, and with the diversity and extent of the man's influence, not only throughout the nineteenth century, but pervading our contemporary life and thought. Rousseauism continues to be with us, unabated, unescapable. If it is no longer a potent force in the recent imaginative literature of Europe and America, it remains the informing soul of much that we all read; it has gone far to shape the popular religion which prevailingly is being preached in our time; it is at the center of nearly all our thought about government and social life; and, as Professor Wright truly says, it "has had a far greater influence than any other educational theory", and "with all its ideality it is at least practical enough to have become the main foundation for the schools and colleges in nearly all the world to-day". Yet, at the same time, Rousseau himself remains a center of bitter controversy, so that it is hard indeed to judge whether or not many of his zealous followers have betrayed their master or have propagated the true gospel. Hence any book which purports to answer this question fairly and disinterestedly merits serious attention and, in fact, tacitly claims a position of central importance in contemporary literature.

Professor Wright's book, however, it must be said regretfully, does not make good its claim. Alas for excellent intentions! They are everywhere evident in this volume, but their presence makes it only the more gravely misleading. For it is the work of one who has

* *The Meaning of Rousseau,* by Ernest Hunter Wright. Oxford. (My quotation is from *The Times Literary Supplement.*)

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come to idolize his subject, and who cannot rest content until he has persuaded us that Jean-Jacques is the great father of all which is generally thought to be good in the modern world, that he was a profound philosopher whose wisdom is self-consistent and lays bare the ultimate truth about ourselves and our institutions, and that all save a blessed few of his multitudinous critics have been merely blind or malicious or corrupt in their refusal to understand his real meaning.

It is not difficult to see how one thing led to another. Professor Wright must early have discovered in himself that famous, that peculiar "sixth and moral sense with which so few hearts are endowed, and without which no person whatever", as Rousseau assured him, could understand the sentiments of his. Guided by this infallible organ, he saw that Rousseau's intentions throughout his life were always good, and concluded that to understand his real meaning it was necessary to pierce through surface difficulties to the underlying intention. And to grasp this and explain it, of course, was tantamount to proclaiming its excellence. When he read in the *Social Contract*, "All my ideas are consistent, but I cannot expound them all at once", he saw readily what this meant. When hopelessly inconsistent assertions were made, clearly Rousseau could not have meant both of them. He must have meant only the "good" one—consistent, to a reverent mind, with his other "good" assertions—and it became straightway "preposterous" to imagine that he might really have meant what he said whenever it was "bad".* Thus it became obviously impossible "to believe that any man so humble and so reverent" as the Savoyard Vicar could really have expounded a religious faith which was "only the expansion of his own soul".† Hence the conclusion of the most competent and thorough of all students of Rousseau's religion was lightly dismissed to enable Mr. Wright to pursue his chosen way untroubled.* And much else was dismissed, in accordance with a principle frankly mentioned in connection with Rousseau's idea of the education proper to females. "If we are dealing with the Rousseau who is still alive in our day," we are told, "we may omit all further reference to" subjects which he has dealt with unhappily.† This principle, of course, materially facilitated the general conclusions summarized above. And thus Professor Wright came to the end of his disinterested inquiry.

My description, I am aware, will sound like a parody of critical method. That is not my wish; but it would appear to be the inevitable result, in this case, of attempting to state the facts briefly. The development itself must have been very slow, carrying Mr. Wright imperceptibly, and all honestly, into a procedure which he would himself doubtless characterize, in any other connection, as fantastic, but for which he might well plead, in this case, the necessity that knows no rules. The difficulties were so great! and his own intentions were unimpeachable. And, besides, he did keep his head—he did express himself moderately, and did remember that Rousseau was not a man to be glorified, and did take into account not only the seeming but the real contradictions in his books;—above all, he did admit that despite his efforts he had not finally been able to weld Rousseau's doctrines into a perfect unity. This is quite true —and yet quite negligible; for his circumspection did not at all prevent Professor Wright from falling into the critical method I have described. Circumspection served only to disguise that method and render it plausible, with the consequence that this book takes its place unescapably beside those which Jules

* See pp. 10–11.

† See pp. 155–156.

* P. M. Masson, *La Religion de J. J. Rousseau*, II, 120: *"Il ne s'agit point de se perdre en Dieu, mais plutôt d'absorber Dieu en soi. . . . Dans le paradis de Jean-Jacques, Dieu lui-même s'effacera discrètement pour laisser place à Jean-Jacques"*. Mr. Wright acknowledges the competence and thoroughness of Masson, and makes large use of his work, so far as he conveniently can.

† P. 64.

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Lemaître had in mind when he wrote: "It is really a pity that Rousseau's best friends should constantly be forced, in their commentaries, to distinguish between what he affirmed (which is often inept), and what he probably thought. They seem to reason thus: 'The proof that what he said was not what he meant to say, is that its refutation would be too easy. A delicate mind does not judge him according to what he says; that would be too coarse' ".* But, Lemaître continued, if you grant the contention, what is gained? For "this difference between the thought and the expression is nothing but charlatanism". And from this charge I do not think Rousseau can possibly be cleared. Certainly Professor Wright does nothing to vindicate him. The following passages, I believe, completely set forth the nature of his attempt:

> The idea that man must be perfected by his reason in accordance with his nature runs through all of Rousseau's work and gives it an essential unity. . . . It is quite true that there are passages from him, most of them written when his thought was struggling into birth, which seem to contradict [this idea]. Far too much has been made of them. . . . We shall find that most of them will harmonize with what we have been saying if we will but make sure of their intention instead of tripping over their terms. Perhaps some of them will remain irreconcilable. But so much was expected at the start. Rousseau was not a man to leave all trim; he was a man to make the most of the idea immediately before him rather than to shape it into careful consonance with all the other ideas in his mind. And while he is not utterly unique in this, we have shown that he is capable upon occasion of throwing off a phrase which can all too easily be wrested from the main intention of his work and even urged against it. . . . For Rousseau [is a rhetorician, and] has the dubious gift of epigram, and loves to fling off now and then a kind of paradox that remains unforgettable when all the context that explains and mitigates it is forgotten. Thus every one remembers his saying that "the man who thinks is a degenerate animal"; and only too often that paradox and a few others like it have been taken for the head and front of his philosophy.*

There we are: Rousseau was a great thinker, amongst the most profound, but a slovenly one; and he could never resist the temptation to shock, even when it was completely against his real purpose—even when he thus said just the opposite of what he meant. And these sayings, we must kindly remember, are but few, and are merely rhetorical flourishes. Is there any other man known to history, for whom equal claims have been made, who has had thus to be defended? I think not. It is really but a step, one will observe, from this to the conclusion of M. Maritain: "Let us not reproach him. The 'Father of the modern world' is an irresponsible. These contradictions are not in the least calculated". Here, however, we are on firm ground again. For I think everyone not rendered desperate by an impossible task would agree that Rousseau's manner of expression is part and parcel of the man. As he spoke, so he was—a creature all compound of irritable sensibility, with the intense though often shallow feeling of his kind, continually exasperated by his contacts with life, always expecting much and always receiving little, timid in action and bold in imagination, for ever impelled to overreach himself, extreme in all things, yet satisfied with none. And Professor Wright's apology for him is a double failure: it does not meet, but seeks only to minimize, the accusation that there was in him a strain of charlatanism, while it evades the major and significant contradictions in his writings to

* "Close your Lemaître, and open your *Contract*," says Mr. Wright; and he cites Lemaître's *Jean-Jacques Rousseau* some five times only as a prominent example of the vile and partisan compositions all too usual amongst books on Rousseau. This is fair enough; the book is frankly partisan, and extreme in its hostility. At the same time, however, it is the work of a talented man of letters, and contains many a keen and true observation (like the one above quoted) which Mr. Wright could have pondered with profit. The student, in fact, if he had to choose between the two, would gain a far truer and better rounded conception of Rousseau from Lemaître than from Mr. Wright.

* Pp. 32, 30, 3–4.

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explain the merely notorious ones by the claim that Rousseau's literary style is a thing apart, separable from the man and his real meaning, and should be disregarded by the fair-minded critic.

The claim is necessary, I should suppose, if Rousseau is now to be presented to the world as a great and fundamentally consistent thinker. And with the death of romanticism such an effort was to be expected. It labors, however, under fatal difficulties, of which the transparently illegitimate attempt to disregard Rousseau's manner of expression is perhaps the least.

Consider, for example, the problem of conscience, of "that sixth and moral sense with which so few hearts are endowed". Rousseau assures us solemnly that it is a primordial gift, bound up in the original constitution of every human being, and an "infallible judge of good and evil, making man like to God". It alone raises man above the beasts—"an innate principle of justice and virtue, by which, in spite of our maxims, we judge our own actions or those of others to be good or evil". Because of this principle implanted "in the depths of my heart, traced by nature in characters which nothing can efface", "I need only consult myself with regard to what I wish to do; what I feel to be right is right, what I feel to be wrong is wrong; conscience is the best casuist; and it is only when we haggle with conscience that we have recourse to the subtleties of argument. Our first duty is towards ourself; yet how often does the voice of others tell us that in seeking our own good at the expense of others we are doing ill? We think we are following the guidance of nature, and we are resisting it; we listen to what she says to our senses, and we neglect what she says to our heart; the active being obeys, the passive commands. Conscience is the voice of the soul, the passions are the voice of the body. Is it strange that these voices often contradict each other? And then to which should we give heed? Too often does reason deceive us; we have only too good a right to doubt her; but conscience never deceives us; she is the true guide of man; it is to the soul what instinct is to the body; he who obeys his conscience is following nature and he need not fear that he will go astray".

These sentences from the Savoyard Vicar's creed are clear enough, and further quotation would only show that they fairly represent Rousseau's belief. But what are we to make of them when elsewhere in *Emile* we read that "Reason alone teaches us to know good and evil. Therefore conscience, which makes us love the one and hate the other, though it is independent of reason, cannot develop without it. Before the age of reason we do good or ill without knowing it, and there is no morality in our actions, although there is sometimes in our feeling with regard to other people's actions in relation to ourselves".

In each of these accounts Rousseau, to be sure, has the other in mind, and the Savoyard Vicar has a little formula for harmonizing them. "To know good," he says, "is not to love it; this knowledge is not innate in man; but as soon as his reason leads him to perceive it, his conscience impels him to love it; it is this feeling which is innate." The harmony here, of course, is merely for the eye or ear, not for the mind. This is simply a species of verbal trickery which does nothing to bridge the chasm between the two passages quoted above. And this is not all; for what is Rousseau's conception of reason? How does it enable us to distinguish between good and evil?

In *Emile* there are a number of passages concerning the nature of reason which are clear as far as they go. From them we learn that it "is only the power to compare and judge" "precepts or ideas". What Rousseau calls "the reasoning of the senses" "consists in the formation of simple ideas through the associated experience of several sensations"; and what he calls "the reasoning of the intellect consists in the formation of complex ideas through the association of several simple

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ideas". This is the nature of reason. But we learn further that man is not born with this art or power, which is merely an instrument serving his needs, and called into being by them as they develop. Man *is* born with a single passion, self-love, which never leaves him. "This passion is primitive, instinctive; it precedes all the rest, which are in a sense only modifications of it." Rousseau nowhere, so far as I know, gives what purports to be a full list of "the rest" as they appear in the "natural" man, nor, indeed, any list which he does not elsewhere contradict at some point. However, the following list is, I believe, as fairly representative of his uncertain opinion as it is possible to make it. Amongst the "natural" derivatives or modifications of self-love are: compassion or sympathy, fear, pain, the dread of death, the desire for comfort, the desire for health, the desire for freedom, the desire for food, for a female, and for sleep. Reason, then, is the servant of self-love and of its "natural" modifications; and, like other servants, is undependable, untrustworthy, liable to all manner of mistakes.

In the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* we learn further that "it is by the activity of the passions that our reason is improved; for we desire knowledge only because we wish to enjoy; and it is impossible to conceive any reason why a person who has neither fears nor desires should give himself the trouble of reasoning. The passions, again, originate in our wants, and their progress depends on that of our knowledge; for we cannot desire or fear anything, except from the idea we have of it, or from the simple impulse of nature". "In all the nations of the world the progress of the understanding has been exactly proportionate to the wants which the peoples had received from nature, or been subjected to by circumstances, and in consequence to the passions that induced them to provide for those necessities."

Reason, being the servant of our wants, developing in proportion as these multiply, ministers always ultimately to self-love. It may, however, be guilty, when sufficiently sharpened and refined, of usurpation—and then it becomes an instrument of evil. "When I see a man in love with knowledge, yielding to its charms and flitting from one branch to another unable to stay his steps, he seems to me like a child gathering shells on the seashore, now picking them up, then throwing them aside for others which he sees beyond them, then taking them again, till overwhelmed by their number and unable to choose between them, he flings them all away and returns empty handed." The lover of knowledge, supposing that he makes no mistakes and imposes none on others, is frivolous perhaps rather than positively evil, and harms chiefly himself; but his degeneration leads directly to a far worse development—it leads to philosophy, which perverts man from his "natural" goodness and fills the world with error. "It is reason that engenders self-respect, and reflection that confirms it; it is reason which turns man's mind back upon itself, and divides him from everything that could disturb or afflict him. It is philosophy that isolates him, and bids him say, at sight of the misfortunes of others: 'Perish if you will, I am secure'. Nothing but such general evils as threaten the whole community can disturb the tranquil sleep of the philosopher, or tear him from his bed. A murder may with impunity be committed under his window; he has only to put his hands to his ears and argue a little with himself, to prevent nature, which is shocked within him, from identifying itself with the unfortunate sufferer." Further, "the chief source of human error is to be found in general and abstract ideas; the jargon of metaphysics has never led to the discovery of any single truth, and it has filled philosophy with absurdities of which we are ashamed as soon as we strip them of their long words". And the seriousness of this indictment will be realized when we remember that it is error, and never ignorance, which is the source of all the evils of our life.

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Reason, we thus see, when it outstrips its proper office, becomes a potent, a devastating source of evil; and when kept to its proper work it is the fallible but useful instrument of self-love. In Rousseau's opinion it does not develop far so long as man remains "natural", but becomes powerful in improving both the individual and his material circumstances only when man's wants or passions have crossed the fatal line beyond which they are no longer "natural". This admitted improvement, however, is attended by abuses so great that, in order to achieve it, man is often degraded below the level of animal existence. And his only remedy is the establishment of conventions, dictated by enlightened self-interest, yet so absolute in their enforcement that they may have the character of natural laws. A society so organized would be "unnatural", like the individuals composing it, but it would have the advantage of preserving to men the benefits of passing beyond their "natural" state by giving their actions—through the conventions just mentioned—"the morality they had formerly lacked". This is the method of banishing the evils created by man's developed social life and civilization which Rousseau proposed in the *Social Contract*.

The problem of conscience, like most problems started by Rousseau, has led us a long chase, and would take us farther—with, however, no different result. Rousseau, as everybody knows, felt the inadequacy of the narrow rationalism of his time, though he also fell inevitably and strongly under its influence. Thus he gave the primacy, not to reason, but to passion, in his account of man's fundamental constitution. Yet he did not dispense with reason, though he evidently wished to, more than once. Instead, he made it the useful servant of the passions. And in this capacity reason could and did distinguish between good and evil *of a certain kind*. It was not infallible—quite the contrary—but when it worked successfully it enabled man to choose, in any given circumstances, the best course to follow in satisfying his needs. This was the "good" which man could come rationally to know—how to secure food when he was hungry, how to secure warmth when he was cold, how to make life easy, safe, and comfortable. But man could not go far in the pursuit of such "good" without bringing evils in the train of his achievements which Rousseau thought to be worse than bestial. Hence he devised the plan set forth in the *Social Contract*, to enable each member of a community securely to satisfy his own needs, in so far as this did not interfere with any other member's satisfaction of *his* needs. The conventions worked out to this end would be "unnatural", but would be the logical goal towards which the use of reason pointed, and would constitute a prudential or utilitarian morality. And thus finally reason would enable man to distinguish moral good from moral evil, though continuing to work as the instrument of self-love.

But where, still, is conscience? Nowhere, to speak plainly. Rousseau's reason could never by any possibility tell his conscience what to love, what to abhor; as, indeed, he himself recognized explicitly enough when he was actually immersed in thought about conscience. Later he did try to find a place for conscience in his general account of human nature: having derived sympathy from the father of all the passions, self-love, he then pointed out that these two must conflict with each other on occasion, and proclaimed that conscience was a third passion born of this conflict.* But to make conscience thus the grand-daughter of self-love,

* Professor Wright accepts this disposal of conscience without the slightest indication of awareness that there is any difficulty in it. Perhaps, if questioned, he would say what he says in answer to one of Morley's objections to the Savoyard Vicar's religion. Morley complained (very pertinently, as we shall see) that "a subjective test necessarily proves anything that any man desires". Mr. Wright answers: "Rousseau does not believe" it! (pp. 155–156.) This might be unobjectionable, though absurd enough, were we confronted, with fair warning, by a plain, completely uncritical exposition of Rousseau's

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and so one of the passions which "are the voice of the body" will not fill the bill. The trouble is not merely that conscience has been deliberately and eloquently defined as the voice of the soul, or heart, *opposed* to the passions which "are the voice of the body"; it is also that, as Rousseau was at times willing to admit, the derivatives or modifications of self-love could never come into fundamental conflict with that ultimate passion, and that reason remained always its servant. And we have seen that in this capacity reason, as it developed, became fertile in devising evil under the guise of "good"—moral evil, that is, issuing from the individual's intelligent procedure in satisfying his wants.

There is, indeed, no way out. Rousseau's conscience is something ultimate, absolute, sufficient to itself, superior to his reason, opposed to his reason. It cannot possibly be connected with his "natural" man. There is, in fact, a fundamental break between his "natural religion" and his "natural man", nor is the problem of conscience the only sign of it, though it is perhaps the most striking one. Nor, again, is this incoherence, though important, an isolated exception to Rousseau's general achievement as a thinker. On the contrary, it is characteristic. *Emile* fairly bristles with logical difficulties, and the *Social Contract* no less. In the "good" society "each man, in giving himself to all, gives himself to nobody". On precisely the same principle, the magistrate, being responsible to all, is responsible to nobody. Hence his rule is illegitimate, and his subjects, if they do not violently depose him, are the slaves of a tyrant—while, if they do depose him, they can only become the slaves of a new tyrant by the same process. This, of course, is not what Rousseau intended—but it is what, notoriously, he never knew how to avoid. His aim in the *Social Contract* was so to organize government as to preserve for the individual his "natural" freedom and his "natural" equality with others under the conditions imposed by social life. To this end he candidly admitted that several miracles were requisite.* But, even with their aid, he could not avoid ending with a social organization so absolute in its power and so extended in its scope that under it the condition of the individual was only verbally distinguishable from that of a slave. His apologists have expended vast pains and endless argument upon the effort to help him out of this impasse, with not the slightest success.† And, in general, the attempt to discover intellectual consistency in Rousseau's writings is simply chimerical, and can end only in evasion and falsification.

Nowhere, moreover, is his inconsequence more significant and fundamental than in connection with "virtue". It can be said without qualification, I believe, that everywhere in his writings there is an insurmountable gulf fixed between his "natural

writings—and, indeed, something of this sort is actually promised. But we have already seen that the promise is not kept—is, in fact, only remembered when it may be used to Rousseau's advantage. Even when it is being made it is ambiguous, leaving us doubtful whether the exposition is to concern itself with what Rousseau did say or with what he must certainly have intended to say. And as the book proceeds no pains are neglected to make the exposition a plausible basis for the highest claims in Rousseau's behalf, which are plentifully made, and whose general drift has been indicated above.

* See Bk. II, Chap. 7, "The Legislator".

† The following sentences are from the General Introduction to C. E. Vaughan's definitive edition of *The Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (I, 111–112): "Socialist, in the strict sense, Rousseau was not; but he was collectivist, heart and soul. So far from being the charter of individualism, the *Social Contract* is a defiant statement of the collectivist ideal. . . . The only complaint to make is that he gives not too much, but too little, power to the individual; that, with the zeal of the new convert, he ruthlessly burns the idol he had once inconsiderately adored. It is on this side, not on the other, that his theory is open to attack. And the task that lay before subsequent thinkers was not to overthrow his 'individualism', but to bring his collectivism within bounds. . . . The 'indivdual', he argues, has no existence save in the imagination of the individualist. In himself, he is nothing but a 'stupid and limited animal'; it is only in and through the State that he becomes 'a reasoning being and a man'. It is to the State that he owes his moral and intellectual being, his self and all that constitutes his individuality".

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man" and the morally good man. In *Emile*, in the *Social Contract*, in all of Rousseau's thought, morality only makes its appearance, anomalously, after the "natural man" has somehow suffered the death of his "natural" parts. But what, then, becomes of the famous doctrine of "natural goodness"? It obviously meant a great deal to its author; at times it apparently meant everything to him; and upon it, more than upon anything else, his fame and influence have depended. Yet what, exactly, was the doctrine? Does the phrase, as Rousseau constantly uses it, have any single underlying meaning, which is connected with his account of man's original endowments? If it does, it may mean that man, being born with certain needs, voiced by the passion of self-love and its modifications, is also born with powers adequate to the satisfaction of these needs; so that the "natural man" is "good" for—that is, sufficient for—the real requirements of his original nature. He is perfectly self-sufficient, and in this sense is "beyond good and evil"; he is neither moral nor immoral, but non-moral.

This sometimes seems to be the real meaning; but at other times Rousseau clearly means something a little further removed from ordinary usage. He means that man's inborn self-love is "good" in the sense that it is essential to the maintenance of life. If one were not endowed with this passion, one would not exert one's self to keep on living, no matter how slight the requisite exertion. Hence man is "naturally good" in that he is well designed for self-preservation. And evidently this is a not illegitimate meaning, though one which is either totally indifferent from the ethical standpoint or positively unethical. For it answers nothing to the question whether or not self-preservation is ethically a good; and while, truly enough, practically all of us, with or without sufficient reason, suppose it to be a good, *other things being equal*, practically none of us supposes it to be a good under all circumstances and absolutely. Moreover, it will be remembered, Rousseau allows a number of other passions, derivatives or modifications of self-love, to be equally "natural"; yet "natural goodness" in its present sense tends to become meaningless if stretched to include all of these desires—that for freedom, for example, or health, or comfort. Is one to say that man's inborn love of freedom is "good" because it is essential to the maintenance of a free life?—or is the difficulty obviated by saying, essential to the maintenance of a desirable life?

No, circularity can be avoided only by stepping over into the ethical sphere, by saying that man's inborn love of freedom is good because freedom is essential to the ethically good life. And in fact Rousseau does most often speak of "natural goodness" with an ethical implication, and does most often intend by it pretty much what the world has understood him to mean. But how can he do so consistently, or legitimately?—and how can he give the phrase a variety of ethical implications constantly shifting and not always compatible with each other?

That he does so cannot be denied, and is not denied. And no answer whatever can be given to these questions by those who have imagined for themselves a philosophical Rousseau, save the egregious one that he did not really intend the greater number of the things he says. This is not to assert, however, that there is no answer, nor that there is no unity of any kind in Rousseau's work. The solution of the problem is, indeed, simple enough, if only one is willing to accept all of the factors presented to us by the "Father of the modern world" in his work. And the one possible method of solving it is suggested in D. G. Ritchie's brief conclusion: "When people appeal to 'Nature', they appeal arbitrarily to what they happen to like or approve".*

Rousseau constantly made this arbitrary appeal, with no calculated disingenuousness —with, in fact, the most intense and most

* *Natural Rights*, p. 69.

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sincere feeling. And the bewildering variety of his approvals, the seeming recklessness and real inconsequence with which he joined together incommensurable propositions, finds its explanation precisely in this circumstance. What he liked and approved was determined by *feeling*. And the unity, such as it may be, of his writings is a unity of *feeling*. The man was a creature torn by irrepressible passion, grasping at any means of literary expression, careless of mere intellectual difficulties, bound to impress *himself* on the world by sheer force. And if we would understand his writings we can only hope to do so by taking them for what they are—a species of lyrical ebullition—and by realizing that the key to them will never be discovered through any tortuous and sophistical "harmonizations", through any miracle of artful exegesis, but solely through study of the man. He sought to express *himself*;—we will learn what he meant whenever we become willing to recognize that his books *are* the expression of himself. His books came into being, took the form we know clothing the substance we know, not in spite of what he was, but just because he was the Jean-Jacques who lives still "in all the integrity of nature" in the *Confessions*.*

He himself wrote there his own best commentary. From those pages, and from them alone, we can learn with perfect certainty what "natural goodness" really meant to him, as the following passages show:

> My master's tyranny rendered insupportable that labor I should otherwise have loved, and drove me to vices I naturally despised, such as falsehood, idleness, and theft. . . . I love liberty, and I loathe constraint, dependence, and all their kindred annoyances. . . . As nothing could be more opposite to my natural inclination than this abominable meanness, I note it, to show there are moments of delirium when men ought not to be judged by their actions. . . . I had no companions to vitiate my morals: I became idle, careless, and obstinate, but my principles were not impaired. . . . Never was wickedness further from my thoughts, than in that cruel moment; and when I accused the unhappy girl, it is strange, but strictly true, that my friendship for her was the immediate cause of it. She was present to my thoughts; I formed my excuse from the first object that presented itself: I accused her with doing what I meant to have done, and as I designed to have given her the ribbon, asserted she had given it to me. When she appeared, my heart was agonized, but the presence of so many people was more powerful than my compunction. I did not fear punishment, but I dreaded shame. Had I been left to myself I should infallibly have declared the truth; but they intimidated, instead of encouraging me. . . . I know not whether it proceeds from my mortal hatred of all constraint, but if I am obliged to speak, I infallibly talk nonsense. . . . [This fortnight was] amongst the happiest days of my life. I was continually occupied with a variety of pleasing chimaeras, and never did the warmth of my imagination produce more magnificent ones. . . . She thought she saw in me an honest man, and in this she was not deceived. Had I had no natural inclination to the poor girl, compassion and contradiction would have produced it in me. I was always a great friend to decency in manners and conversation [The "poor girl" was Thérèse Levasseur, who became his mistress and bore him his five children, successively abandoned from some of the finest and purest motives produced in the *Confessions*]. . . . Of this I appear guilty in my conduct, but my heart has been too much distressed by what I did ever to have been that of an ungrateful man. . . . With respect to happiness and enjoyment, everything or nothing was what was necessary to me. . . . This tenderness was soon changed into rage against the vile informers, who had seen nothing but the evil of a criminal but involuntary sentiment, without believing or even imagining the sin-

* Professor Wright, like everybody else, makes use of some facts taken from the *Confessions*, but mentions the book only once; and then describes it, for the purpose of discrediting it, as a work "done under partial taint of madness in old age" (p. 33). This moved even his enthusiastic reviewer in *The Times Literary Supplement* to protest. And, for the rest, Mr. Wright summarily dismisses the truth about his hero in one vague and skilfully qualified allusion: "Rousseau is not a pleasant man, for one thing, though there may be good in him" (p. 6).

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cere uprightness of heart by which it was counteracted.*

Passages like these could be almost endlessly multiplied—all telling the same story of a man sincerely upright in his own opinion, betrayed time after time into evil actions through no fault of his, but solely because of the vileness of those who surrounded him. And that is "natural goodness"! That is what it comes down to in the end—nothing better, newer, stranger than fine professions excusing baseness and confirming self-love. It is an old story, and long ago it was set down, calmly and simply, for what it really is:

> When a man thinks that others are to be blamed, and not himself, for the errors which he has committed, and the many and great evils which befall him in consequence, and is always fancying himself to be exempt and innocent, he is under the idea that he is honoring his soul; whereas the very reverse is the fact, for he is really injuring her. . . . Of all evils the greatest is one which in the souls of most men is innate, and which a man is always excusing in himself and never correcting; I mean, what is expressed in the saying that "Every man by nature is and ought to be his own friend". Whereas the excessive love of self is in reality the source to each man of all offences; for the lover is blinded about the beloved, so that he judges wrongly of the just, the good, and the honorable, and thinks that he ought always to prefer himself to the truth. But he who would be a great man ought to regard, not himself or his interests, but what is just.†

Thus briefly can be exhibited the ground of the uncompromising hostility which the doctrine of "natural goodness" and its attendant sophistries have called forth from Rousseau's day to ours, from Edmund Burke to Professor Irving Babbitt and Mr. Paul More. And that hostility is the more profound just because, although everything is unmistakably clear in the *Confessions*, everything is almost infinitely perplexed in those famous books which form the heart of Rousseau's legacy to the modern world, in the *Discourses, La Nouvelle Héloïse, Emile*, and the *Social Contract*. What may not be found in them? In *Emile*, for example, are gathered together the precepts of well-nigh all of the important writers on education for a century or more before its composition, and, besides, much derived from ancient classical writers. For though Rousseau hated books, and could never follow with patience the thoughts of another than himself, nevertheless, he read widely and took something from everything he read, and sooner or later found a place for it in the outpourings of his heart. And everything he wrote, whencesoever it came, he touched with fire—the hot fire of intense conviction. Thus he attracted to himself and re-animated much that all thoughtful men value in the literatures of the ancient and of the modern worlds. But thus, too, he became the father of endless confusions;—because all that he wrote he welded into seeming union with the gospel of self-flattery which has subtly exacerbated and depraved the human spirit from one generation to another for a century and a half, and which remains today still potent for evil. And it is for this reason that the "arch-sophist" has from his day to ours encountered the undying opposition of all men who understand and value integrity. Had the "message" of Jean-Jacques been unambiguous it would have been, not harmless, but far less dangerous to his brothers. The devil, as men have been warned, is never so likely to confound us as when he comes to us clothed like an angel and joins us at our prayers.

* I have shortened one or two passages, and altered the arrangement of sentences in another.

† Plato, *Laws*, Bk. V, 727, 731–732.

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A LAST LONDON LETTER

A COUNTERBLAST TO HUMANISM

by Rebecca West

London, June

WHEN I read in Professor Paul Elmer More's article "A Revival of Humanism" in the March BOOKMAN, the phrase "the ignorant and conceited outburst of Mr. Allen Tate", I said to myself "I think I shall have to go". When I read in "Chronicle and Comment" in the same number the ironic comment, "Which is to say that T. S. Eliot, Paul E. More, and Jacques Maritain, for instance, are less intelligent than Edmund Wilson. Which is absurd", I said "I know I shall go". When I read further on in the same article a phrase referring to the writers who have been attacking humanism in other American papers: "After all, their backs are against the wall, for if a few managing editors become aware of how things are going, there will be some highly talented literary critics pounding the pavement", I said, "Lo! I have gone". Spiritually I was already pounding the pavement and proud to be doing so.

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I object to Professor Paul Elmer More's phrase regarding Mr. Allen Tate not because I am modest enough to think I ought to hide when ignorance and conceit are denounced, but because I find the phrase incomprehensible as a description of Mr. Tate's article, and unpleasantly incongruous on lips self-dedicated to restraint and decorum. I object to the tone and content of the comparison drawn between Edmund Wilson and the three other critics because their implications strike at the root of criticism. I do not agree, to start at the beginning, with the attempted disparagement of Edmund Wilson. I submit that there are no grounds for supposing that T. S. Eliot could have written anything on a par with the articles on modern French literature which Edmund Wilson has recently contributed to *The New Republic*. There is no evidence that he would have been equal to such a sustained effort. To judge from his restricted field of reference he could not have covered the ground; and such authors as he dealt with would have had to fear that remarkable power of misunderstanding what he reads which has led him into certain comic misreadings of individual passages in Shelley and Swinburne and of the entire significance of Benda and Maurras. Those who have preferred familiarity with Mr. Eliot's work to blind admiration for it know the part of his criticism that deserves to survive either is slight and charming and purely impressionist (like his *Dante*) or consists of reproductions rather than developments of the ideas of Professor More and Professor Babbitt. The rest is a flustered search for coherence disingenuously disguised by a style which suggests that he has found it.

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Indubitably Professor More is a greater scholar and philosopher than Edmund Wilson. It is however obvious from his references to modern French literature that he also could not have covered the ground of these particular articles; and we have reason to believe it would have been impossible for him to have judged any series of modern phenomena with the detachment shown by Edmund Wilson. It is to be feared that emotion would have led him to reactions as uncontrolled by reason of his use of the phrase "pseudo-scientific treatises" to the work of Mr. I. A. Richards, a scholar of academic distinction fully equal to that of Professor More at the same age. In the reference to M. Maritain we reap the consequences of one of Mr. Eliot's misrepresentations of French writers. It is untrue that M. Maritain enjoys anything like the pre-eminence as a philosopher in France that Mr. Eliot has led his generation to believe. There are higher and purer sources of Aquinism than him. As those of us who have attended M. Maritain's lectures know, he is charming and persuasive beyond belief; but he has only the virtues of a popular preacher, and he is not without the defects of that eternal type. It is impossible to conceive him writing anything so little determined by its effect on the sensibilities of the reader as Mr. Wilson's articles.

Even more objectionable than this underrating of a writer who possesses in such high degree the qualities that justify writing—a will to find the truth and a brain that is an efficient instrument for the search—I find the incident that provokes the judgment. What has brought down contempt on Edmund Wilson's head is his opinion that it is no longer possible for a first-rate mind to accept the supernatural basis of religion. In other words, the writer of "Chronicle and Comment" refuses to respect the spiritual struggles which have led Edmund Wilson to arrive at the conclusion that it is not possible for a first-rate mind to accept the supernatural basis of religion; yet he is willing to respect the spiritual struggles which have led T. S. Eliot to the conclusion that it is. Yet surely the progress of art and science depends on our respecting spiritual struggles only in so far as the protagonist shows by his dialectical conduct that he will accept all truth that he discovers in the course of his struggle, regardless of how far it tallies with his original prepossessions. Certainly Edmund Wilson, in his patient research into original sources and in his loyalty to logic, to name but two of his qualities, shows a high standard of dialectical conduct. The depreciation of him compared with three persons whose superiority in this matter is so highly arguable suggests that we have strayed into a world, not high in the intellectual cosmogony, where it is held that certain beliefs are in themselves a certificate of mental gentility. Those who hold them are entitled to look at persons of equal gifts and attainments who do not hold them as, in another world (hardly, it seems to me, more unsuitable for the fastidious), persons in the Social Register look at persons not in the Social Register. In this world bigoted Protestants despise persons not to be despised, such as Valéry and Claudel, because they are members of the Roman Catholic Church; and bigoted Catholics despise most of English and American letters because it is written by Protestants; and the writer of "Chronicle and Comment" writes of his opponents: "After all, their backs are against the wall, for if a few managing editors become aware of how things are going, there will be some highly talented literary critics pounding the pavement". I am not aware of the full list of opponents, but I know they include Edmund Wilson, T. S. Matthews, Henry Hazlitt, Babette Deutsch, John Chamberlain, and Carl Van Doren. Most of these writers are personally unknown or very slightly known to me. Some of them are hostile to me. But I know their work, and its level of intellectual integrity; and it seems to me that the ascription of such motives to them, par-

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ticularly when it too proceeds from lips self-dedicated to decorum and restraint, is not to be tolerated.

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But even if these expressions had not seemed to me extremely unlike those which should be employed to create an atmosphere proper for the discussion of art and science, I fear that I would have been uneasy in a periodical dedicated to humanism. This is not because I am hostile to its ostensible end: the maintenance of tradition. I would point as a certificate of my soundness in this respect to the fact that in my own country my implacable foes are Mr. Arnold Bennett and Mr. St. John Ervine. I do not find however that humanism is likely to maintain tradition as satisfactorily as the modern writers—Proust, Joyce, Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Aldous Huxley, to name but a few—whom it so sweepingly repudiates.

It seems to me—and here it takes some courage to put down my findings, in view of the controversially archaic disposition of humanists to answer the mildest criticism with accusations of "impudence"—that your faith is too much in the nature of an apostolic following of two men, and those two singularly unfitted to act as guide to tradition through this age. I am well aware that Professor Irving Babbitt and Professor Paul Elmer More are among the most learned men now living. Their learning does not however prevent them from laboring under certain disqualifications which forbid them to understand contemporary life. Professor Irving Babbitt gave me a shock in that respect which I have never forgotten when I read *Rousseau and Romanticism*. That book builds up out of the most immense resources of scholarship a case against the movement for the sanctification of ecstasy and the discrediting of intellect to which Rousseau gave impetus and which persisted throughout the nineteenth century in France and Germany and to a lesser degree in England. I enjoyed it thoroughly. But what I could not understand was the tone of querulousness with which the case was conducted. Throughout Professor Babbitt's manner was that of one who disdainfully outlines a point of view peculiar to a small group of the saved and anathema to the general. Yet I cannot think of anybody literate, except Mr. Middleton Murry and his small band of followers, who holds a contrary opinion.

Looking back to my schooldays I remembered that my literature master had never ceased to try and influence our tastes against the emotional excesses of the Romantic Movement. We were always warned that while we might find Keats and Shelley and Byron satisfying in our youth, later we would see the superiority of a steady lamp to fireworks. "If you cannot read Milton when you are older," said Mr. Budge in good Scots idiom, "never let on you were pupils of mine." The uncontrolled exuberance of Bulwer-Lytton and Disraeli, of George Sand and Lamartine and Musset, afforded an opportunity for a great many quite good jokes, which were coupled with recognition of their own good qualities. Thackeray's guy of Goethe's *Werther* ("Charlotte, . . . Like a well-conducted person, Went on cutting bread and butter") was recited with acclamation. This attitude towards Romanticism was not peculiar to this particular master. Over the way in the history classroom, I remember, the master told us of Victor Hugo's comic proceedings during the *coup d'état*, and clearly gave us to understand that he owed his ridiculousness to participation in a ridiculous movement. Nor was this attitude peculiar to my school. At the time I read *Rousseau and Romanticism* and was startled by its affectation of eclecticism I questioned my two sisters, who had been educated some years earlier than myself, not in Scotland but in England, one at a high school and one at a famous boarding-school, and found that they had been indoctrinated with the very same sensible opinions. Professor W. P. Ker said

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to me: "It has been the standard attitude during my lifetime". So thoroughly did we have this point of view drummed into us that nearly all of us found it difficult to read Rousseau because of his emotional fanfaronades, and had to be seduced into doing so by the good Morley. None of us, I think, did so without having received innumerable warnings from our youth up that what he said concerning the angelic nature of the natural man was dubious. In other words, the point of view that Professor Babbitt peevishly exhibits as a rare jewel which the world is not fit to own is about as rare as a nickel.

* * *

Another example of a similar baseless claim is contained in his *Democracy and Leadership*. I challenge anyone to examine the files of the English Tory paper *The Morning Post* for the last thirty years, and be able to detect any difference between the philosophy which inspired the persons responsible for its leaders and its policy, and Professor Babbitt's philosophy as expressed in that book. Both take their stand on what Professor Babbitt identifies as the distinction between humanism and humanitarianism and the condemnation of the latter. That was the position which the late Lord Milner and the late Professor A. V. Dicey (to select but two names out of hundreds that offer) based a series of attacks on the *Zeitgeist* very much in Professor Babbitt's vein. It was the position too on which the late Lord Balfour, abler thinker and statesman than any of those three, based his lifelong attempts to coördinate the ideals of aristocracy and democracy by urging aristocrats to submit themselves to the discipline of control to which demos has submitted, and by urging democrats to submit themselves to the discipline of preparation to which aristocracy has submitted. It is a position with which every boy or girl who goes to a public or high school is made acquainted in the civics class, with which every adolescent likely to play a part in politics is familiarized in the Oxford and Cambridge Unions, and all other University Unions, at the London School of Economics, the Workers' Educational Association, and the Independent Labour Party local meetings.

If Professor Babbitt were to appear before them and tell them that they must have standards, and that they must get these standards "by coöperation of intellect and imagination" and by disciplining the "feelings or affections, to use the older words, to some ethical center", they would heartily agree and explain that they were very diligently seeking for the best means of ensuring that coöperation and locating that ethical center. He would, if he pressed the matter further, find that they were no more enthusiastic Rousseauists than himself; and that the reason the Liberal Party had died was that they were just as sceptical as he was of humanitarianism. Again, the precious pearl of wisdom which we are to be shown as an act of condescension turns out to be a truism which is not often stated only because it is so generally accepted.

Professor Babbitt in his attitude to his contemporaries closely resembles the luckless soldier one has sometimes seen on a parade ground who fails to hear the last order and goes on performing the last order but one, convinced that everybody in the regiment is out of step except himself. It is unusual to make such a soldier a drill-sergeant. It is true that acceptance of Professor Babbitt's main thesis will do nobody any harm. To prefer Aristotle to Rousseau is certainly the way of grace, and though most of us would do that in any case it illumines argument to have Professor Babbitt state the case again with his unrivalled power of allusion; and similarly we can enjoy reiteration on these terms of the truism that it is better to be sane than mad. ("To lack sanity," he somewhere helpfully explains, "is to be headed towards misery and even madness.") But to accept his attitude towards the moderns seems to me a pity. It consists mainly, of course, of

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disapproving generalization, but when he touches the concrete he often surprises us by his naïveté. "The partisans of expression as opposed to form in the eighteenth century led to the fanatics of expression in the nineteenth and these have led to the maniacs of expression of the twentieth. The extremists in painting have gone so far beyond Cézanne, who was regarded not long ago as one of the wildest of innovators, that Cézanne is, we are told, 'in a fair way to achieve the unhappy fate of becoming a classic'." Just how genuinely sensitive to art Professor Babbitt is can be judged from this unfortunate reference to the heir of Poussin who was despised only because he conflicted with the Romantic Movement against which in theory he has such a fastidious and unerring reaction. No, I have no great confidence in this drill-sergeant.

* * *

As for the other, I approach him with even greater respect and misgiving. Every lettered person must feel the deepest gratitude to the author of "The Greek Tradition" not only for its masterly coördination of religion and philosophy, and its easy collation of fascinating historical material, but for its power to communicate what had seemed nearly incommunicable in language limpid as spring water. Only the other day I heard a discussion that might have lingered on for weeks and then have ended inconclusively, crisply resolved and sent on to another stage by citation of a foot-note from *Christ the Word*. "I must say here," he appends to his statement that the Christian religion began with a myth, "that by the use of the word 'myth' nothing is implied prejudicial to the truth of the event designated. It simply means that any commingling of the two spheres of the divine, and the human, any revelation of God to man, must assume an anthropomorphic character." I noted that all parties concerned delayed for a moment to admire the grasp of intellectual process that lay behind those two sentences, and that those who knew the volumes had to say what pleasure they had derived from them. Paul Elmer More the Platonist is a center of light, whom one can neglect only at heavy cost to oneself. I am sure of that. But I am equally sure that Paul Elmer More the critic of modern literature is a guide that one can follow only at heavy cost to oneself.

One cannot read for long in the "Shelburne Essays" without coming on phrases that are highly embarrassing to one's reverence for Professor More. Sooner or later one comes on phrases as odd as this: "Longfellow, we are told by his biographer, wrote but a single love poem (and I, for one, am ready to honor him for this reserve). . . ." Why, one wonders, should Professor More respect a poet for "reserve" because he writes only one of a sort of poem not necessarily associated with lack of that quality?—particularly when that one essay, as Professor More points out, shows that quality to excess. One wonders still more when one reads in his essay on "The Irish Movement": "There is one trick of both (though it is much more marked in Mr. Yeats)" (Professor More had coupled the name of Mr. Yeats and Arthur Symons on the basis of a resemblance between them which was, no doubt, more apparent then than it is now) "which may seem trivial, and yet does in some way connect itself with the total impression of their art. This is an insistence on the hair in describing women. Just why this habit should smack of decadence, is not quite clear to me, but the feeling it inspires is unmistakable. Out of curiosity I counted the number of allusions to hair in the few poems that make up Mr. Yeats's *Wind Among the Reeds*, and found they mounted up to twenty-three".

There follow phrases that are some of them otiose and some of them commonplace but that none of them could evoke in any rational mind the description "troubling and unwholesome" that Professor More gives to them. To dwell on these oddities is not to

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number oneself among cavillers who see nothing of the sun but the spots on it. For they are not superficial. They are the minor effects of a tendency in Professor More which has major effects in plenty. It is a tendency to raise a fog of feeling in front of certain aspects of humanity instead of facing them calmly, in spite of the fact that it is obviously impossible for his judgment to operate justly in this dimness. Sometimes this leads to blindness regarding esthetic matters he is committed to discuss; for example, he becomes so excited over Arthur Symons's lachrymose pretensions to promiscuity that he quotes one of his most dreadful poems ("White girl, your flesh is lilies Under a frozen moon, So still is The rapture of your swoon Of whiteness, snow or lilies", and so, regrettably, on) without any of the called-for comminations. I am not, be it understood, complaining that Professor More is prudish. There is something very far from prudery in the good sense and good breeding with which he refuses to accept Austin Dobson's pullulations against poor Hazlitt for the *Liber Amoris*. In point of fact there are more allusions to sex in the "Shelburne Essays" than one will find in, let us say, the critical works of Mr. I. A. Richards. There is no obligation on any author to write about the subject or to keep silence on it.The aspects of life which Professor More refuses to face are far deeper and wider than the single element of sexual behavior, as he states in one of the most memorable passages in modern literature:

"But now at the last" (he writes of the effect of evolutionary theory) "we are shocked out of our serenity. We are made conscious of the shame of the hidden past, and the ancient haunting terror is revealed in all its hideous nakedness. Have you ever by chance strayed through a museum where the relics of old-world life are gathered together —filthy amphibians armed with impenetrable scales, grotesque serpents eight fathoms long that churned the seas, huge reptiles that beat the air with wings of nightmare breadth! The imagination recoils from picturing what the world must have been when Nature exhausted herself to fashion these abhorrent monstrosities. We have burrowed the soil and brought into the light of day these reluctant hidden records of bestial growths. Consider for a moment what it would mean if some new geology should lay bare the covered strata of memory in our own brain corresponding to these records of the earth; for there is nothing lost, and in some mysterious way the memories of all that obscure past are stored up within us. If evolution is true, we are the inheritors in our soul of the experience and life of those innumerable generations whose material forms lie moulded in the bedrock of earth. Consider the horror of beholding in our consciousness the remembrance of such fears and frenzies, such cruel passions and wallowing desires as would correspond to those gigantic and abortive relics of antiquity. Would not the world in its shame cry out for some Lethean draught of sleep, though it were as profound as the oblivion of Nirvana? This is the terror, then, that from the beginning has beset the upholders of religion, and has caused them to attack the revelations of natural science; for what faith or beauty of holiness can abide after such an uncovering? None, unless to obtain spiritual grace the whole memory and personality of a man be blotted out, and the spirit be severed from the experiences of the body by an impassable gulf. And I think the shadow of this dread is typified in the curse which Noah laid upon his son Ham."

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Is this really the expression of a mind that one could trust as guide to contemporary art—that is, to the future? I pass over the extremely curious spiritual implications of the passage; though I would give much to hear some sturdy Roman Catholic opinion on a believer who so signally failed to per-

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form "an act of resignation to the divine will" by this wholesale rejection of creation, and who took the doctrine of original sin as a reason for evading the duty of self-examination. It is more relevant to our discussion to note the oddity in an avowed traditionalist of this perfervid cult of the moment. For the paragraph is, of course, a confession of pure present-worship. Professor More says that he will have nothing to do with human nature except as it is at this moment, or as it was at such moments in the past when it took forms that are consonant with its present-day notions of its dignity. This program is of course most nourishing to our complacence. We ourselves at our present stage of development are being taken as the center of the universe. But unfortunately it does more than reject the past, it makes an attack on the present which is none the less mischievous for being indirect. For the present is as inextricably fused with the past by descent as a child with its mother. Parts of the present declare their relationship with the past without disguise, and in considering them we look straight down a shaft into the darkness of the primitive heart.

If we abandon ourselves to Professor More's attitude, we are bound to do as he does and refuse to consider these calmly and bravely, and to raise a fog of feeling about them in which the judgment cannot operate. Other parts of the present do not so visibly declare their relationship with the past; and for these, if we abandon ourselves to Professor More's attitude, we will inevitably be tempted to falsify an origin and a functional value flattering to our present selves. This means we regard modern religious and philosophical beliefs and social and economic arrangements not as experimental adjustments forced on man by his inner need to adjust himself to the universe, each to be judged according to its success in helping him to realize his highest aims, but as the noblest conceivable of ethical achievements, which it would be sacrilege to alter. Here again is a condition in which the judgment cannot operate; and for proof that it does not we have only to read Professor More's curiously passionate and unconvincing attack on Goldie Lowes Dickinson's mild reformism in the "Shelburne Essays". Since our judgment is the one weapon we are given to insure that the present shall not be the prelude to disaster, the consequences of this attitude cannot be dismissed lightly.

But even more murderous is the effect of Professor More's attitude on the future; and one can see the blow being delivered in the requirements he makes of modern art. Works of art, we learn, must show man as possessed of free will and must subscribe to the theory of his dual nature. The mind cannot conceive a single step more likely to bar the progress of mankind than that philosophy should claim the right to make art her mouthpiece. It is the business of philosophy to establish what truths she can, so that the artist growing up within her sphere of influence starts work as close to reality as possible; it is her business to examine the truths established by his creations to see what bearing they have on those of her own finding. But the conceptions of philosophy are so much coarser than those of art that it is infinitely distressing to think of them being thrust on the artist.

The conceptions of free will and dualism, for example, seem intolerably crude compared to the conceptions relating to character which lie behind the persons invented by, say, Turgeniev. Why does Professor More think art exists? Does he think it is simply a means of communication, like the mail or the Western Union? Does he not realize that it exists because there are truths which the mind finds too subtle and too awful, to grasp save under the reconciling remoteness of the symbolic representations staged by the imagination? Those who try to make the artist work to their own moral program represent not knowledge guiding ignorance, but knowingness misleading wisdom.

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Indeed, this is no place for me. Not only do I find the movement unsatisfactory in its main personalities, I think it likely to exercise a stultifying influence on the literature of the next few years, and I wish to take none of the blame. Humanism, with its claims to a final "traditional wisdom" which its followers and nobody else possess in quantities vast as the Humbert millions, with its dismissal of all the contemporary writers who are trying to hand on tradition, is going to do incalculable harm to the sensitive and gifted young man who feels that he can write, finds it difficult to start writing, and is eaten up by a sense of inferiority to those who have found performance possible. He will be encouraged to convert this sense of inferiority into a sense of superiority, not by performance, but by subscription to a very easily held faith. One will then have a world of T. S. Eliots who have not achieved *The Waste Land*, who are utterly sterile and utterly complacent. They may make some attempts to carry out this new recipe of creating works of art to exhibit the beauty of free will, but this is such a breach of tradition that as a traditionalist I can have but little faith in it. Most of the time will, therefore, be spent of necessity in preaching the doctrine. That is to say, the excellences of Professor Babbitt and Professor More will be celebrated as continually as they have in the last few issues of THE BOOKMAN; Rousseauism, which nobody but Mr. Middleton Murry believes in, will be hotly denounced, and so too will monism and determinism, particularly in relation to art, which has nothing to do with them anyway; persons vaguely believed, probably on the deluded testimony of Mr. Eliot, to be in sympathy with humanism, will be warmly praised as fellow soldiers in a united army, even when —like M. Benda, M. Jacques Maritain, and M. Maurras—their interest in it is infinitesimally small and they are so hopelessly at odds over all issues that it would be impossible to persuade them to sit down at the same table; persons vaguely believed to be out of sympathy with the movement will be denounced on principle without scrutiny of their relationship to traditional wisdom. I cannot smother a suspicion that in the course of time this program will be found a little dull. There will be more and more wrangles as to who is firm in the faith and who is not, such as the discussion involving Eliot and Maurras and Professor Babbitt in the "Chronicle and Comment" of the March BOOKMAN. It is a weakness of the flesh, no doubt, but such wrangles are not universally found amusing. After a few years or so of this humanist régime the younger generation will be inevitably so frightfully bored that they will stampede humanism out of existence and rush back to the moderns—Joyce and Lawrence and Huxley and Virginia Woolf will be the gods of their worship, and we will have the twenties all over again. No! They will probably go back to the teens, to Wells and Shaw and Galsworthy. And the thirties, when asked what they did in the Great War of the intellect by the editor of the BOOKMAN who is ushering in the forties, will have to answer that they put back the clock.

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It occurs to me that the state of affairs which humanism threatens to precipitate in your country resembles that which exists in certain circles today in France. Maurras and Gide and Massis and Lasserre and Benda and Seillière and Maritain all proclaim themselves the classicists, in possession of the full traditional wisdom of mankind, and cry out on the romantics who have repudiated it. But Maurras and Gide are at daggers drawn, and so too are Gide and Massis; while Lasserre is shocked at the nineteenth-century rationalism of Benda, and Seillière and Maritain are at intellectual fisticuffs. Can it be that this situation is an inevitable consequence of engaging in this apparently noble tournament, the war between classicism and

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romanticism? Can it be that there is something false in the proposition debated, which automatically commits both its defenders and its assailants to absurdity? There is good ground for the suspicion. All these people complain with an air of superiority that the romantic "comes into being where sensibility usurps the function to which it is foreign, and not content with feeding and furnishing the soul with the warmth of life it requires, busies itself in steering it", and classicism represents the workings of minds where sensibility is properly subordinated to the intelligence. But it is significant that the words I have quoted come from an essay by Maurras, whose exuberant style and swashbuckling political activities prove him the reincarnation of Victor Hugo. It is relevant to remember that each of us wants to have a mind that works coolly and under control; that we are apt to pretend to ourselves that we have it; and that we are equally apt to heighten our pride in our fancied possession by pretending that others are not so well endowed. The battle between romanticism and classicism is perhaps only a dramatization of this infantile human tendency, which in order to lift itself onto a higher level links itself with an intellectual issue that is itself a confusion. For there has surely been established on purely terminological grounds a false connection between the Romantic Movement initiated by Rousseau (which certainly was dangerous in the rashness and inexactitude of its dialectical conduct) and the healthy dual process necessary to art, the two parts of which we call romanticism and classicism. The first part consists of recognition of new material by the artist. He exposes his intellect and his emotions to a new stimulus, he finds expression for his new reaction. The effect is disturbing to himself and everybody else who apprehends it. For it breaks the mould of the universe as it was before the new experience was added to it. Then he is a romantic. If he remakes the mould of the universe afresh, incorporating the new experience and re-establishing the order which he has undone, then he is a classic. Both these phases can be found in a single work of art, if it is of the highest order. Both of them can be found in an artist's output as whole, if he is a great artist. Sometimes an artist performs the first part of the process, and another the second. Sometimes to see it in its completeness one has to look not to individual artists but to a movement, a school, or even a civilization. It is therefore no use denouncing the romantic. He is a necessary precursor of the classic. If he has fairly analyzed the experience which is his subject and synthesized his findings into a true work of art, it is no use complaining because he has disturbed the universe. Peace will come later. Art promises this, and it is the high joy of humanity that it has fulfilled its promise. Some years ago I committed myself to this view of romanticism and classicism in the *Herald Tribune*, and I stick by it.

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When the shrieks of laughter have died down, and the first crop of sniggers at the "ladies" and the exquisite humors of their attempts at criticism have been got over, I will explain why I stick by it with extreme obstinacy. I stick by it because I find that it is also held by Paul Valéry. It has been stated by him in an introduction to *Les Fleurs du Mal*, and I accept his authority because he is a great poet, a creator. That gives him an authority that the orthodox pro-classic participants in the discussion are without. For of Maurras, Gide, Massis, Lasserre, Benda, Seillière, and Maritain, only Gide is a creator: and he is so distraught a seeker after novelty in his creations that he gives no reassurance. It is true that Jean Moréas was associated with Maurras, but he died advising his friends to stop worrying their heads about romanticism and classicism and think a little more about the difference between good and bad writing. The fact is that behind this classicist campaign there is no litera-

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ture at all. It unfortunately appears that the same charge can be brought against humanism. I have read with interest the list of contributors to the volume in *Humanism and America*: Norman Foerster, Louis Trenchard More, Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, G. R. Elliott, T. S. Eliot, Frank Jewett Mather, jr., Alan Reynolds Thompson, Robert Shafer, Henry Hayden Clark, Stanley P. Chase, Gorham B. Munson, Bernard Bandler II, Sherlock Bronson Gass, Richard Lindley Brown. I heartily agree with Professor Babbitt's opinion that the text "By their fruits ye shall judge them" is an excellent touchstone to apply to movements. But there is an overwhelming reason why it cannot be applied in this case. I recognize in this list the name of only one creator, T. S. Eliot, and he, in spite of his genius, has long ceased to create. For these we are to exchange Proust, Joyce, Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Virginia Woolf. Forgive me, but I am not gambler enough to dare such an exchange, or to seek association with what looks so remarkably like a league of the noncreative against the creative.

AN OPEN LETTER IN REPLY

Dear Miss West:

I am very glad that you availed yourself of my cabled invitation to "be as emphatic as you want to" when you asked whether I minded your devoting your last letter to an explanation of your resignation as THE BOOKMAN's European correspondent. I am glad, for its own sake, to be able to publish so vigorous and effective a piece of writing. I am also glad to give the many BOOKMAN readers who are not in sympathy with humanism the satisfaction of seeing an attack on it in these pages at least as powerful as any that have appeared elsewhere. These readers should now be reassured that while THE BOOKMAN is editorially in favor of humanism, and will continue to champion it as vigorously as possible, THE BOOKMAN's pages are, as always, open to writing from other points of view if it seems to promote the circulation of ideas or the cause of literature.

I am extremely sorry, naturally, to lose you as a monthly contributor, and THE BOOKMAN's readers will share my regret. The magazine has never had a more popular contributor; which is not surprising, since you have never, I think, done more brilliant work than as its roving European correspondent. There would be an added poignancy to my regret if I really thought, as your article might suggest, that you were leaving because of a sentence of Mr. More's which is hardly as sharp as you yourself are accustomed to use, and because of two sentences of mine interpreted in a way that the sentences themselves will not admit. But I realize that your difference with THE BOOKMAN has deeper causes, and that a regular association between you and the magazine was doomed from the time the present policy was adopted.

I am surprised that so practiced a hand at ascribing "unconscious" motives should have thought I was questioning the integrity of the critics of humanism in suggesting that they are so immersed and involved in the dominant literary tendency that they are unable to dissociate themselves from it sufficiently to examine fairly a contrary set of ideas. I have elsewhere charged, and I think established, that there has been considerable lack of scruple in the attacks on the humanists. But anything so ridiculous as a blanket accusation of venality was far from my purpose. These *ad hominem* arguments are, I admit, not the highest form of controversy. I have resorted to them occasionally on the assumption that

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they are the only kind of argument some of the opponents of humanism will understand, since they are the only kind they use. There is no other way, I submit, to make critics aware of what they are doing in making their slurs about snobbishness, gentility, race prejudice, and so (regrettably) on, or such remarks as yours about Mr. More and compulsion neuroses which I quoted last month. —I am the more surprised that you should accompany your indignation at my supposed charge with a similar charge against T. S. Eliot.

I hesitate to think what you will make of my remarks on Edmund Wilson in my concluding article, after seeing what happened to the two sentences about him which you quote. In those few words, it seems, I struck at the roots of criticism, I poured general disparagement and contempt on Wilson, and I refused to respect his spiritual struggles. Goodness! Is it really such a crime, these days, to suggest that Christians, too, can be intelligent? I knew that I was dealing with inflammable material in protesting against Wilson's example of the popular rationalistic bigotry which classes all Christians as defectives, and I knew that I was making matters worse by belligerently presenting three names in Wilson's own field which disprove his silly notion; but I was hardly prepared for the particular development which you have given to my small remark. Nor am I prepared for it now; I am afraid I will have to pass up the opportunity for comment.

I am not quite certain whether in measuring Eliot, More, and Maritain by the standard of a certain series of articles of Wilson's, and in deciding that they fall short, you were seeking to establish that the three men have second-rate minds. Since that was the only point at issue, I would like to suppose that you were dealing with it. On the other hand, your test seems so inadequate that I would like to suppose you were not. I will grant freely, for the sake of argument, that the subject of Wilson's articles could not have been handled so well by the other three men. I will grant any comparison of this kind you want. I will admit that Wilson can write a better sonnet than Maritain, a better novel than Eliot, a better comedy than More. I will admit, nay I will proclaim, that nobody else in the world could have written the brilliant parody of James Joyce that appeared in the *New Republic* last spring. But what then? It would still remain true that counter-comparisons would demolish Wilson's contention. Your series should have a different ending: "In this world bigoted Protestants despise persons not to be despised, such as Valéry and Claudel, because they are members of the Roman Catholic Church; and bigoted Catholics despise most of English and American letters because it is written by Protestants";—and bigoted sceptics say, "It is no longer possible for first-rate minds to accept the supernatural basis of religion", and "Most Americans of the type of Eliot . . . have some such agreeable fantasy [as the Church] in which they allow their minds to take refuge from the oppressions and perplexities about them", and "It is highly arguable whether Paul Elmer More, Jacques Maritain, and T. S. Eliot will accept all the truth they discover, if it does not tally with their original prepossessions".

Sometimes they say worse. I am truly sorry that you were led to make your remark about a world "where it is held that certain beliefs are in themselves a certificate of gentility"; because it forces me to say that your form of rationalist bigotry seems to me rather worse than Wilson's. Where he was foolishly ruling Christians out of the councils of intelligent men, you were, according to the only meaning I can find in your words, seeking to stop them from defending themselves in the only way possible, by making the naming of names seem something odious. It is apparent that you wrote under the impression that I am a believer. If I were, I think that your thrust would have succeeded. I would have been wounded, dismayed. My mouth would have been stopped. I would have risen to

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defend my right to speak, and I would have been left blushing and wincing at being told that my very presence was an insult. But it happens, since you have made the unimportant fact relevant, that I am as sceptical of revealed religion as you or Edmund Wilson; or, shall we say, as J. M. Robertson or Joseph McCabe, or even Joseph Lewis or E. Haldeman-Julius. I am not defending or opposing faith or its absence. I am simply insisting on an obvious truth which involves elementary justice. For that reason, your remark did not touch me as it was presumably intended to. Its only effect was to make me regret, for your sake, that I was not this time in a position as editor to suggest that you strike it out.

The obvious fact which I am asserting, the fact that persons of our persuasion have no monopoly of "first-rate minds", is not a pleasant or an easy one for us sceptics. It is indeed a very difficult one. It does not tally with our original prepossessions. It shocks our self-esteem. It confuses our cosmos. But there it is. That Wilson is half aware of it is shown by the way he contradicts himself in the matter. On the same page in which Eliot is denied a first-rate mind and told that his conversion "is sadly symptomatic of the feeble condition of modern literary people, of their unwillingness or incapacity to confront the realities about them", he is—very grudgingly, to be sure—admitted to have the first-rate mind that has been taken away from him. You can see just how grudgingly: "Even if a few first-rate men like Eliot manage to convince themselves that they do accept them [church doctrines], one cannot see how they can honestly contemplate the possibility of a renaissance of faith general enough to make the Church intellectually important again". Eliot cannot "honestly" hold an opinion which would obviously be the first that would seize a man after his conversion!

As I say, this quarrel is not one I am personally involved in. But there would seem to be sufficient reason for my entering it in the circumstance that my own position renders me impervious to the kind of reply which you have made, and the kind which Wilson made when Mr. Cuthbert Wright protested in a letter to the *New Republic*. Wilson was able to dismiss him by saying "Between a believer and an unbeliever there can be no real argument", and to continue smugly on his way, patronizing Eliot, sneering at More, and disregarding such men as Maritain. In his reply to Mr. Wright, who had suggested that Eliot might be discovering valuable things in the older tradition to which he was going back, things needed today, Wilson strikingly revealed another of the contradictions involved in his position. I quote the whole passage, which you may or may not find highly embarrassing to your reverence for its author:

"I am very far from being sure . . . that humanity as a whole is not better off in the United States today than in Europe in the Thirteenth Century. It depends on what you mean by 'better off'—it depends on what you mean by civilization. Eliot says that he means 'a spiritual and intellectual coördination on a high level', as distinguished from 'material progress, cleanliness, etc.' But, as a matter of fact, are not these two things inextricably bound up together? Is there really any difference in value between the instinct to be clean or to travel quickly and the instinct to preach fine sermons or to make beautiful verses? Does not civilization include all these things, and, in discussing how much people are civilized at any given place or time, must we not take all these things into account? Mr. Wright would probably like better art and literature than the contemporary American world produces—and so should I. But how would the other inhabitants of the country like to be set back in the European conditions of the Thirteenth Century—with no bathrooms, no public schools and no automobiles? With the ignorance, the slavery and the plagues of that day, would they really be 'spiritually' better off? Would the cathedrals really make it up to them? Would Dante and Aquinas make it up to them? Would

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these masterpieces of medieval civilization really make it up to Mr. Wright and myself?"

I will not stop just now over the incidental jewels of this memorable passage—the confusion of the functions of plumbers with those of poets and priests, the equating of cathedrals and filling-stations, the description of the finest fruits of a spiritually unified age as the indulgence of an "instinct to preach fine sermons or to make beautiful verses". Do not be thrown off by the sudden irrelevant introduction of the "other inhabitants"; Wilson reappears in his last sentence. Do you see the huge contradiction I mean? Eliot, we are told, is fleeing from the perplexities, the oppressions, and the other realities of the modern world which he cannot face. But, on the other hand, life in the modern world is much easier than life has ever been before! Neither this nor the other contradiction is verbal. The contradictions are inherent in Wilson's whole view of history. I am willing to respect Wilson's spiritual struggles as fast as I learn about them. But I will not be convinced "that he will accept all truth that he discovers in the course of his struggle, regardless of how far it tallies with his original prepossessions", until he accepts the very evident and very important truth which I was pointing out in the words that occasioned this discussion.

I am delighted that you, too, are on the side of tradition, however much we might differ in defining it. I remember being amused to notice, when you wrote on "Tradition in Criticism" and T. S. Eliot wrote on "Experiment in Criticism", in the little book the Oxford Press brought out last year, that the two papers were almost identical in the field they covered. With a few rapid strides you crossed the ages and landed in the nineteenth century, to which you devoted most of your space; while Eliot, in his manner of dealing with the present, was more frequently in the nineteenth than the twentieth. I am reminded, also, of V. F. Calverton's protestation that even he is a traditionalist: "We do need tradition, but it must be a new tradition in consonance with the new age. The task that confronts us is to establish that tradition".

Your objections to humanism, or rather to the humanists, seem to simmer down to two. The first is that the humanists have nothing new to offer, but are merely repeating what every person of sense has always known. It seems to me that you make out a very good case for this point by your rich array of instances. In fact, I wonder whether you have not been a little too successful. I myself was thoroughly convinced; I do not think I could have been more convinced even if you had quoted the abundant humanist testimony to the same effect, even if you had quoted from the article of mine which annoyed you so. But is not the reader, after it has been demonstrated to him that the humanists are in accord with what is generally accepted by the soundest authorities, likely to be somewhat disconcerted by your second line of attack? For here he is told that the humanists are really very terrible people: they cannot think, they do not know what is going on in the world, they are confused and poorly informed in the very fields in which they have specialized; they are so thoroughly pernicious that they will, in brief, stultify all whom they do not bore to death. Now is not this a little hard on the late Professor Ker, and the late Lord Milner, and the late Professor Dicey, and the late Lord Balfour; and the Oxford and Cambridge Unions, and the good Mr. Budge, and your sisters' teachers? One or the other of your two accusations, I daresay, is true. But, if you will permit me a purely technical criticism of your argument, I think it would have been better if you had sought to establish only one instead of both of them.

Somehow I was less embarrassed by your quotations from Mr. More than you were. You found it "odd" that he should praise reserve; I am inclined to think that he took pains to insert that parenthesis in order to have precisely that effect. For I have had it borne in on me, perhaps because I have considerable familiarity with his work rather

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than blind admiration for it, that there is an extraordinary degree of courage in the way in which he has always made it a point to speak in behalf of qualities that have been unpopular during his lifetime. "Reserve" would probably head a list of such qualities. If he had suggested that reserve was the one quality in a lyric poet worthy of honor—that, indeed, would have been odd. But I have not come across that particular suggestion. . . . More counts the allusions to hair in certain poems in an attempt to analyze a subtle literary effect; you count the allusions to sex in More and I. A. Richards in order to—I am not sure just what. Not to show that More is prudish, for he has "good sense and good breeding" in these matters. On the other hand, certainly not to attest his good sense and good breeding, for his feelings get the better of him in these matters and he refuses to face the facts.

There have been some highly elaborate misquotations of humanists in recent months, but I am inclined to think that you take the prize by the way you have used the passage about the filthy amphibians, of which you make so much. Did you really think that to be More's comment on evolution? Then you missed the whole point of not only one of the more memorable passages, but one of the most memorable essays, in modern literature. If you will read again, carefully, the study of Lafcadio Hearn in which the passage occurs, you will see that it means something entirely different. More was commenting, you may remember, on the writings in which Hearn had for the first time in literature brought together the Oriental idea of metempsychosis and the Occidental idea of evolution. "From this union with science," he said, "the Oriental belief in the indwelling of the past now receives a vividness of present actuality that dissolves the Soul into ghostly intimacy with the mystic unexplored background of life. As a consequence of this new sense of impermanence and of this new realism lent to the indwelling past, all the primitive emotions of the heart are translated into a strange language, which, when once it lays hold of the imagination, carries us into a region of dreams akin to that world which our psychologists dimly call the subliminal or subconscious". (Remember, this was in 1904.)

He then gave some examples of Hearn's use of this novel combination and commented: "Is it not proper to say, after reading such passages as these, that Mr. Hearn has introduced a new element of psychology into literature? We are indeed living in the past, we who cry out that the past is dead". Then More threw out the suggestion that "the foreboding of this dreaded disclosure may account for many things in the obscure history of the race", and developed the suggestion for several pages: the Greek legend of Prometheus, the early Christian battle with pagan philosophy and science, the conflict with the followers of Copernicus, the battle over Darwinism. Throughout, More's viewpoint was obviously an ultra-rationalistic conception of "the warfare between science and religion" which I imagine he would smile at now; although he paraphrased sympathetically what he took to be the attitude of the guardians of religion. It must have been his ability to do this last which threw you off. After summarizing history through the biological theory of evolution, he came back to Hearn's innovation and carried his suggestion down to the present, or rather into the future, by launching into the eloquent passage which you have quoted. Read in its context, it is seen to be no more the author's attitude than is his presentation of the viewpoint of the executors of Hypatia and Bruno.

I do not say that the mood was utterly foreign to More; indeed I can scarcely conceive that anyone of sensibility has not felt it occasionally. But there is a vast difference between the elaboration of a suggestion which involves the eloquent expression of a mood, and the considered judgment of a scientific theory which you have mistaken it for. Mr. More, you may be sure, became accustomed to the

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idea of evolution some years before you and I were born. Your whopping misquotation reminds me of Joel Spingarn who some years ago said of More's work: "One after another the writers of the modern world are (to use a phrase of his own) 'stretched on the rack of a harsh ethical theory' ". It was indeed a phrase of More's, but he was paraphrasing a hostile critic before replying to him. A man cannot always write in school-boy English for fear his critics will take his indirect discourse, his unascribed quotations, his paraphrases, and his imaginative flights as the outpourings of his heart. I sometimes wonder why the anti-humanists do not simply invent some weird passage, put quotation marks around it, and introduce it by remarking, "As Mr. More once said". Think of all the time I would spend hunting for it!

I am rather puzzled by the embarrassment to humanism which you seem to find in the lack of unity among the French anti-romantics. Did anyone ever say they had much more in common than their varying degrees of anti-romanticism and anti-modernism? And if diversity is a weakness think of the diversity among the opponents of humanism! You yourself attack Middleton Murry, and as you point out, some of the American anti-humanists are opposed to you—as I could illustrate with numerous quotations. T. S. Eliot's influence and value could hardly be exaggerated in general, but I think you do exaggerate when you ascribe humanist interest in the French anti-romantic writers to Eliot's testimony, whether "deluded" or not. Eliot has done much to make them known in the past ten years, but Babbitt, for instance, has been writing about them for nearer twenty-five. When you say that Eliot has greatly over-valued Maritain's rank as a philosopher, I imagine you refer to his description of Maritain, widely quoted in blurbs, as "the most conspicuous figure and probably the most powerful force in contemporary French philosophy". But is that not really a very guarded estimate of Maritain as a philosopher, and merely an allusion to the position he automatically attained on becoming the first representative of the scholastic revival to catch the ear of the public? There are, as you say, purer sources of Aquinism than Maritain. But I assure you that Eliot and the humanists know that; just as they know that there are in some respects purer sources of Aquinism than Aquinas, in Saint Augustine, Aristotle, and Plato. Eliot may somewhere have misrepresented Maurras, in spite of a familiarity with his work that dates from before the war, but it is not on Eliot's say-so that I question the two adjectives you apply to Maurras. I find his style clear, subtle, forceful, often eloquent; but exuberant, never. And can that mild, deaf, scholarly recluse really be pictured as swashbuckling? Your two words, incidentally, exactly fit his vastly different colleague Léon Daudet.

I do not reject your theory of classicism and romanticism because its author is a lady, but because it seems to me to have little connection with those "facts" that you and Edmund Wilson and I all love so. And Valéry's status as a "creator" gives him as a critic exactly what authority his criticism can earn. I myself find most of his criticism extraordinarily thin and poorly reasoned, as well as maddeningly pretentious. If I am in this a poor critic, the reason is that my judgment is wrong, and not that I am not a distinguished "creator". I am afraid you will find that your jibe at the humanists in this respect, like your other one, is a little too successful, since it rules out names that you would scarcely care to ignore.

S. C.

The conclusion of Seward Collins's article "Criticism in America" is postponed until next month, in order not to overload this issue with humanist controversy. It seemed unfair to Miss West to delay her article longer.

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"THE LION AND THE LADY DANIEL"

Anonymous

It's odd how you never really know your own husband. Here's my Owen, for example, who jogged solemnly along as a well-behaved novelist, sticking respectably to his typewriter and turning out his book a year, with a short story or two for full measure, to say nothing of half a dozen book reviews that gave him a chance to high-hat his fellow-craftsmen and a nice little handmade poem to me on the calamitously recurring occasion of our wedding anniversary. Here's my Owen, I repeat, who developed a really disturbing fondness for his own fireside, the regular hours of the surburbanite and a charred old briar-wood pipe that kept even the children off his knee when he wanted to cogitate over his next chapter.

I'd even fallen into the habit of worrying about Owen. I'd wonder if he wasn't turning into too much of a recluse. I used to wake up in the night and ask myself if he wasn't a trifle too sane and safe; if, in fact, he wasn't getting a little moss-grown and losing his contacts with life. And I was disturbed by the secret thought that my once dashing knight of the ink-well was slipping into the decorous and unadventurous middle age of life, a sedate old Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire in knickers, in knickers that were usually wrinkled and baggy where they shouldn't be wrinkled and baggy, and decorated with dog-hairs and pipe ashes.

But little did I know my Owen. And little did I know my luck. Little did I dream that my placid old house-cat was going to blossom out so abruptly into a sort of Bengal tiger. And it all seemed to come about through Owen writing that play of his.

Owen, of course, had tried to write plays before. Every normal-minded and active-bodied author in this big world, I imagine, has an aborted drama or two tucked away in the bottom drawer of his desk. I'd even done one myself, for our Women's Club, and with my own fair hands dyed the outing flannel for the backdrop and splatter-painted the canvas flats and rehearsed my self-conscious little company of incompetents and sweated in agony when the plump Mrs. Weevil forgot her lines on the first night, and the equally plump Mrs. Klinker, awaiting in vain her cue, turned and stalked indignantly off the stage and out of the production. Yes, I'd been through those refining fires. And Owen himself had had his limited experiences with the Little Theatre movement, doing arty and impressionistic one-act things for an abandoned group of suburbanites who let Thespis loose in a sketchily reconstructed stable where the inextinguishable ammoniacal odors couldn't fail to remind the audience how the horse had preceded the automobile and the equally inextinguishable rats ate holes in our cold cream and we sometimes had to chase the indignant red squirrels off our stage and an incorrigibly leaky roof was finally made impermeable by nailing canvas flats across the weathered shingles, causing our little

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House of Drama to look uncommonly like a gun-pit camouflaged against the eyes of passing airmen.

But this was only toying with the mask and buskin. And Owen, all along, had been nursing his secret hunger to do a real play. He had often and innocently enough proclaimed, coming out of a Broadway theatre, that he'd like to have a try at the drama. Indeed, I never knew an author in my life who wasn't bitten by the bug, who didn't want to climb aboard the theatrical band-wagon, after sitting through a good performance and seeing the well-oiled machinery of professional play-acting functioning in its well-organized way. It makes you want to jump into melodrama about the same as good band music makes you want to march in a uniform.

Owen, I repeat, had already toyed with this game of play-writing. But his experiences had not been exhilarating. He'd done a poetic drama in five acts which got between covers and sold, all told, exactly fifty-seven copies, largely among indulgent friends and relatives who felt that to buy it was a sort of family obligation. Then he went mercenary and did a thirty-minute sketch for a vaudeville team, a one-act thing with as much gun-play in it as the battle of Gettysburg. And out in the sticks and the grapevine circuits, we were given to understand, this rapid-fire sketch was received with approval. But from it, for reasons we could never quite fathom, Owen received only the opening week's royalty. Always, after that, he found himself a full jump behind that agile couple in his efforts to collect. He turned later to what he called a comedy of manners, which made history in a way all its own. For, after a great deal of writing and wiring and telephoning, Owen finally read his masterpiece to a manager who, as it turned out, smoked through the first act, yawned through the second, and placidly slumbered through the third.

"No," was this potentate's final decision. "That last act kills your chances."

"But," objected my naturally indignant lord and master, "how can you criticize a thing when you've never heard it? You were asleep when I read that last act."

The large-bodied producer rang for his secretary at the same time that he addressed my crestfallen husband. "Well, sleep can be a criticism, can't it?"

That story, in due time, got into print and was attributed to about every author and producer in America. But it also served to put a crimp in my poor Owen's stage aspirations. Before the winter was over, however, he got still another blow below the belt. My husband, after a great deal of manœuvring, finally wrung from a reluctant producer a promise to read the comedy of manners, but the manuscript, unfortunately, got lost behind the producer's office radiator for two or three months. Yet it was eventually found and eventually read. It came back to us the day after Christmas, to throw a fine black cloud over our holiday festivities—festivities, I might also add, already keyed up by the prospect of the bigger and better life that was to follow close on the production of the masterpiece. It came back accompanied by a note which ran something like this:

I am returning *The Angel with Fallen Arches*. This comedy, unless punctuated by frequent and prolonged applause, would run at least thirty minutes short. And after a careful reading of the script I'm of the opinion that the required punctuation would not be there.

But all this didn't entirely turn Owen away from the drama. It merely changed his avenue of approach. It soured him on the managers and producers and prompted him to go out gunning for the stars themselves. He put pants on *The Angel With Fallen Arches*, so to speak, by fattening up the "lead" and making it a male star's part. Then he went after the actors, sleuthing them down in their innermost lairs. He got acquainted with stage entrances, and lunched at the Lambs; had long midnight telephone calls from the Players, and more than once missed

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the last train home waiting for some lordly actor to get out of his make-up. He confided to me on three different occasions that *The Angel* was finally sold. But something always happened. Somewhere, at the last moment, there was always a hitch. And my poor old worn-out Owen finally proclaimed that he was sick and tired of player-folk, and that he was going back to a white man's work.

So *The Angel* folded her wings and went to sleep in the back of the failure-drawer in the old highboy, which we always spoke of as the Port of Missing Scripts. And Owen went meekly back to his novel writing and truculently resigned from the board of the Little Theatre, and fell into a decidedly gloomy frame of mind regarding the future of the American drama. I even thought, in my blindness, that his soul had been purged of its last play-writing impulse. But little did I know of the puma that prowled about in the cellared gloom just under the polished floor of fictioneering.

The first inkling of it came with an extra absent-mindedness on Owen's part, when he twice forgot to rack off his home-brew and let Teddie and Allie sojourn over at Aunt Alicia's for two whole days before openly commenting on their absence. He'd give me my morning kiss with a sort of Mariana-in-the-moated-grange dreaminess and he didn't even notice my new black velvet dinner gown. I even began to wonder if Owen's affection for his wife wasn't getting as threadbare as his old tweed suits.

Then my perplexity was increased by strange mutterings I caught on the wing from Owen's *sanctum sanctorum*. I'd heard him, often enough, testing out a line of poetry by intoning it aloud. But in these newer sounds were none of the mellow cadences of blank verse. They were something much more explosive, sometimes loud and sharp, sometimes low and intense, sometimes pleading and passionate.

But I found out, a few nights later, what it was all about. I was propped up with three pillows, reading Houssaye's *Aspasie-Cléopâtre-Théodora* and feeling especially lonesome and neglected, when Owen came in and sat down on the side of the bed. I knew, by the headlight look in his eyes, that he was uncannily wide awake. And, by certain signs and portents, I also knew he wanted to ease his soul of something.

"Polly," he said, as he took my book away from me, "I've a great idea for a play!"

"And I've a great idea you won't sleep tonight," I said as I noticed the semaphoric twitch of his left eyelid, a sort of mouse-nibble of nervousness which always showed when he was over-excited or over-tired. So I rolled out of bed and put on my dressing-gown and lambs' wool mules and got ready to go down and make cocoa and onion sandwiches for Owen. For, ridiculous as it sounds, he always found something narcotic in onion sandwiches and cocoa.

"Now, what's the great play about?" I asked as I crawled into bed and supplanted Houssaye with Bermuda onions.

Owen told me, through a mouthful of sandwich, that it was the sort of thing that would make Shaw and O'Neill look like also-rans. But I insisted on pinning him down to particulars. So, after he'd finished his onions and cocoa and got into his pajamas and shuffled down to the living room and back for my cigarettes, he sat with his shoulders against the footboard and his heels companionably against my knee-joints and told me the story of his play.

He told it badly; for authors, I've found, are never good advance agents of their own wares. But, even discounting that, I wasn't exactly crazy about either his plot or his characters. I wasn't, at least, in the beginning. It seemed too much the old story of a fatal misstep, a harried heroine, a wringing of the bitter truth from the broken lady after the truth meant tragedy to even her victorious enemy. As I said before, I wasn't crazy about it all. But a writer's wife can never afford to be a wet blanket. It's her business

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to fan the little spark into open flame. Yet, oddly enough, as I talked it over with Owen I began to get a new slant on the thing. It was old, in a way, but it was elementary. I began to see it was what theatre-folk call sure-fire stuff. It was the ancient triangle of contention with an entirely new twist. It was as rudimentary as Adam and Eve and the Garden, without smartness or trickery, but with an appeal that got under your skin the more you considered it.

Owen worked it out, eventually, but the process was a hard one on the family. As a novelist, he had been a conspicuously silent worker, stitching his sentences together as quietly as a housewife at her needlework. But when he turned to the drama he became as declamatory as a Neapolitan melon-seller. He shut himself up in his study and ranted and raved and knocked the furniture about until on more than one midnight I had to go to the nursery and quiet Dawn by saying: "Don't cry, darling. It's only Daddy practising his play."

Owen even got the habit of stopping on the street and saying: "Did you see that gesture? That's great!" He'd pussyfoot close to a pair of bricklayers arguing over the price of macaroni and make mental notes of what they said and did. He took my breath away one afternoon on the side lawn by suddenly crying out: "I hate you! Oh, how I hate you for that!" And when I somewhat tremulously asked him what I'd done this time he explained that he was merely testing out a new line for his third-act ending. Just why he had to vocalize it, I don't know.

He was *always* thinking about his play. And in this case he wanted to talk about it as well. He rearranged the furniture in the living room and made me hold one part while he held the other and together we'd go through a scene, go through it hammer and tongs, until Teddie's Airedale crawled away, tail down, under the Chesterfield. Once Owen even brought Thomas in from the garden, ingenuously intent on practising a choking scene on our stolid man-of-all-work. But after one rehearsal the indignant Thomas proclaimed that he'd quit the job before he'd have any more buttons pulled off him that way. It was only by resorting to the severest measures that I persuaded Owen not to build a stage at the eastern end of our sun-room. So instead he merely hung a pair of resuscitated portières there and fell to experimenting with lights and burning out fuses. Every playwright, he explained as he busied himself manufacturing a baby spot by enclosing an electric bulb in a coffee can and covering it with colored gelatine, had to know something about stage lighting. And unless you did it yourself it wasn't done right.

More than once, too, Owen got out of bed in the middle of the night and scribbled and declaimed and scribbled again. And when I'd warn him about waking the children he'd explain that he'd hit on some new lines that had best be pinned down on paper before he lost them. Then he'd try them over again, with divers experimental gestures, and wag his head in approval and crawl back into bed, mumbling and muttering and twitching and twisting as he fell off to sleep again, for all the world like a Fourth of July pinwheel burning itself out.

But the play was written in the end and I soon found to my sorrow that our ordeal was just beginning. Anyone who had been through the theatrical mill might have told me that the creation of a play is small potatoes compared to the placing of a play. And Owen's play had to be placed.

About this, however, Owen had a few ideas of his own. His precious play, which, after giving it seven different titles, he finally called *The Lion and the Lady Daniel*, was only too plainly writen for a woman star. Owen had made it so starry, in fact, that it impressed me as a trifle lopsided, with about all the good lines going to the lady. He'd deliberately baited his hook for the female of the species. He'd emulated the Fifth

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Avenue shopkeeper and displayed his wares to arrest the eye of venal and predacious woman. It was a prodigiously "fat" part. It may have been accident or it may have been design, but my Owen most assuredly found himself in possession of a play that any actress with an ounce of brains would ache to get her teeth into. And Owen knew it.

He knew it so well, in fact, that he got a bit toplofty in his talk about agents and producers and proclaimed that *The Lion and the Lady Daniel* wasn't going to get moth-eaten in any manager's desk. Not if *he* knew it. He didn't propose to do things that way. When you make popovers they should be put straight on the breakfast table. And when you write a star play it should go to a star. And that was what *The Lion and the Lady Daniel* was going to do.

Owen, I must explain, had already been inspecting the firmament for his bright particular star. He'd been taking me into more Broadway performances than I'd seen since the winter he acted as dramatic critic for an evening paper. So I enjoyed my second unexpected riot of play-going, though Owen, I must acknowledge, remained much more solemn about it. He was, all along, secretly in search of the Right Woman. He was seining the theatrical world for her. He was sedulously checking over every able-bodied actress on Broadway, quietly estimating, assessing, appraising. He was going up and down the line, as intent as a police captain circulating through the Rogues' Gallery in search of a suspect. He was looking for the Lady Daniel who'd fit best into his Lion's Den. And he was not only doing it with a disturbing air of superiority, but while on that quest he was ordering new clothes from his tailor and caparisoning himself in raiment that made him look like an actor out of a smart English comedy.

But it was about this time that I put a finger in the pie. When I heard that Susie Whitebait was planning a studio party for nearly all the accessible lady stars on the Equity list I boldly suggested that she should have Owen follow the Algerian sand-reader on her program and read *The Lion and the Lady Daniel* to her assembled guests. And to that, much as it might seem like carrying coals to Scranton, Susie agreed. It was Owen, in fact, who failed to agree. But I fully expected that. So I merely sat tight, waiting for my lord to make his surrender a sufficiently graceful one. Then, running true to form, he finally explained that business had to come before pleasure and announced that he supposed he'd have to read the confounded play to Susie's studio rats, protesting that actresses were nothing but a shooting pain to him and intimating that he'd rather face a firing squad than any such constellation of fixed stars at short range.

But, as I've already intimated, I knew my man. And I knew, even before Owen started practising in the back garden, that he was going through with the thing. So I held my peace. I didn't even object when he declined to let me go with him. I knew well enough that I'd only make him nervous and self-conscious, and this was an occasion when he intended to fling himself.

Just how completely he did so I realized when I unpacked his bag the next day. His dress collar had lost its starch and his shirt looked like something that had been thrown into the Hudson. But Susie herself called me up and told me how wonderfully Owen had read. And she must have been right. For two of the assembled actresses asked to borrow his script, a third inquired why he'd never gone on the stage, and a fourth, somewhere between midnight and dawn, motored him to the station in her own landaulet and tried to wheedle a sort of shot-gun contract out of my poor tired spouse while her chauffeur contentedly slumbered beside the waiting Red Caps.

But Owen, I'm glad to say, kept his head. His play, he knew, was not for that pulchritudinous yet slightly passée barnstormer. He capitulated to none of those perilously beau-

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tiful ladies. He brought both his heart and his script safely home again. But the moccasin telegraph of Broadway began to get its work in. The news was bruited about that a smashing hit was waiting for the right star. It was whispered around that a second William Vaughn Moody had a second *Great Divide* up his sleeve. And eventually Mahomet, who had once worn his shoes out trying to get to the mountain, woke up and found the mountain meekly willing to come to him.

The first one to land on us was Voletta Offley, fresh from her sabbatical year in the studios of Hollywood. And Voletta was a type entirely new to me. Her advent in a maroon-colored limousine with a California license plate was preceded by a barrage of hastily scrawled special delivery letters and midnight telephone calls and ruinously long telegrams. Owen was quietly triumphant, and I myself slightly overawed, when he announced that the great Voletta was coming out to have lunch with us and hear the play read. It seemed almost too good to be true, after so much angling and fishing and coaxing for a hearing in earlier days. It was almost like having a five-pound bass flop up the bank and attach itself to your hook. For the world had read how Voletta's Hollywood salary had been something in six figures, how a Los Angeles real estate operator had shot himself because of her beauty, how it took two secretaries to handle her fan mail, and how she had been dubbed the most photographed woman in America.

I didn't worry much about my Owen getting within shooting distance of such a siren, responsive as I knew my spouse to be to abstract beauty. He may have been half poet, but he had a head on his shoulders. And a wife and children to think of. And a play to sell.

But Voletta's advent, on my part, meant a quick inventory of my larder, a getting out of guest towels and a polishing up of the family silver. For when you receive a demi-goddess who has given public testimony as to her private bath salts, who has seen miles and miles of pulpwood used up to present her effulgent smile to an avid world, who has been press-agented and rotagravured into a household word, you have to put on your best bib and tucker and be ready for her.

So it was a pretty nifty luncheon I plotted, with Thomas brought in from the garden and arrayed in his freshly pressed if slightly too voluminous butler's suit, and my best Madeira tablecloth brought down from the linen closet and Owen's last bottle of *Barolo* cooling in the ice-box.

But Voletta never ate that luncheon. She never even appeared for it. In fact, at exactly a quarter to four she rolled regally up to our porte-cochère, walked in before either the tremulous Tillie or the magnificently solemn Thomas could receive her at the door and was abstractedly grinding a cigarette-end on my carefully waxed living-room parquetry when I meekly entered and explained that I was Owen Brown's wife.

"Where's Owen?" she demanded, without even looking at me.

My first inclination was to tell her the truth and say he was up in his study cussing her. But I smiled sweetly and informed the imperial Voletta that he'd be down in a minute. I even made an abortive effort to engage the lady in conversation. But it was fruitless from the first, for the mind of the lady was otherwise engaged. She opened a heavily embossed maroon bag—it matched her car and her chauffeur—and studied herself long and intently in the mirror on its flap. Then she applied lipstick to her illustrious mouth and did divers and sundry things to other portions of her exposed surface. She did almost everything but take a bath right there in front of me, while I wanly observed that it was warm for that particular time of year and weakly trusted that the trip from the city hadn't tired her. But I might as well have saved my breath. She wasn't even listening to me. And while

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I sat bathed in the aura of her inflammatory French perfume I found myself coming to a decision all my own.

That woman, I said to my own wounded soul, was *not* going to get Owen's play. She would never, never do as a Lady Daniel. Yet even as my heart hardened against her I had to acknowledge that she was beautiful. She was a trifle larger and heavier than I had expected, but as a picture she was perfect. She was like a Norse myth come to life. And there was something careless and open and lawless about her that kept telling me she might have a dangerous influence on anything as unsuspecting and impressionable as my obtuse Owen.

But Owen, when he came in, was business-like enough about it all. He even asked Voletta if she'd like tea, before they settled down to work. And he also asked me if I'd sit in on the reading, which I declined as promptly as Voletta declined the tea. But even from upstairs I could hear Owen going through the familiar old lines, with the familiar rise and fall of the voice. And I remembered, as the clock told me that Voletta would surely be with us for dinner, how Owen had so often said: "The play's the thing!" And his play, I told myself, would always come first with my husband. He was reaching out for his star; he was looking for the torch-bearer who could light the way to a good production, even though she was already over-familiarly calling him "Owen". And it ill-behooved a jealous wife to stand between her husband and success.

So I tried to be fair to Voletta when she stayed on for dinner and insisted that the script be brought to the table and argued with Owen about his third-act curtain and enlarged on how he could give her a better entrance in Act One if he had the English butler crying openly as he tied up her trunks, or perhaps be kneeling over her handbag so that she could place a tremulously understanding hand on his head as he sobbed at the thought of her departure.

I caught the tail of Owen's eye at this suggestion, and from that split second's expression harvested the fortifying deduction that reason was still on her throne, that even my poor impressionable Owen hadn't been entirely chloroformed into subjection. Voletta, I noticed, didn't enjoy much of my dinner, hard as I'd worked to make that repast a regal one. She didn't acknowledge that she was on a diet, but she merely picked at things. Any sane woman could see, from the line of Voletta's hips, that the thought of banting wasn't entirely absent from her astral mind. And once dinner was over she disappeared into the library with Owen, where they went over the last act of their precious play and left me free to do my mending and help the children with their lessons while Thomas and the visiting chauffeur played cut-throat poker in the garage between our dusty old roadster and Voletta's imperial limousine. Owen didn't emerge, in fact, until well after eleven. He looked a bit haggard and harried as he met me in the hall.

"She wants something to drink," he said in a hollow whisper.

"I'll make a milk punch," I suggested. "But will she take it?"

"The punch?" questioned Owen.

"No, the play," I whispered back.

"You're blamed right she'll take it," proclaimed my cocksure Owen. "But the question is, could she put it over?"

"What does she say about it?" I temporized.

"She's been telling me how great she is for the last hour and a half," was Owen's half-moaning whisper.

"But when's she going home?" I demanded.

"She said something about—about staying all night," admitted Owen, with a sigh of resignation that did much to put my troubled heart at rest.

And Voletta stayed all night. I put out my best crêpe de Chine night-gown and a new

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tooth-brush for her, wound my travelling-clock, and went to bed. It seemed hours later when Owen woke me up by shaking my shoulder.

"What is it?" I asked, startled by both the sternness of his face and the fact that it was a quarter to three in the morning.

"She can't do it," he said grimly.

"Do what?" I promptly demanded, foolishly thinking of Potiphar's wife.

"She can't play that part," proclaimed my liege lord.

"Then why don't you tell her so?" I naturally inquired.

Owen wrung his hands in a manner so much of the stage that I was reminded of the fact you can't play with pitch without getting some of it on your finger-tips.

"You can't tell things like that to women like that," he announced. "And she's taken the script to her room with her."

"How touching!" I scoffed. But Owen was in no mood for levity.

"She'll never give it up," he dolorously proclaimed. "She's calling it her baby-child and deciding just who can and can't be in the cast."

I sat up in bed. I was wide enough awake by this time.

"Owen," I asserted with all the strength of my being, "that woman is too fat."

"I was afraid so," admitted Owen. "But what can we do? She's got the script. She thinks I've given it to her. And she'll freeze onto it."

I sat on the side of the bed, thinking it over. Then I came to my decision. I felt like a second Lady Macbeth inciting her husband to murder; but it was no time for half measures.

"Owen," I solemnly averred, "we've got to get that script."

"But how?" asked my tired-eyed husband.

"You've got to go in and get it back, before she wakes up."

Owen shuddered and gulped, gaping at me as though I were the ghost of Banquo.

"You don't mean go into her room?" he demanded.

"It's the only way," I averred.

"But it's—it's like burglary," protested Owen.

"That script is your property," I pointed out.

It took some persuasion, but in the end Owen agreed with me. Yet his hands, I noticed as he thoughtfully took off his shoes, were a trifle unsteady. And there was dew on the dramatist's brow as I put out the lights and touched a match to my bedroom candle. We had a further consultation in the dim glow of that candle, and decided it would be best for him, once he was inside, to use Teddie's new birthday flash-light. Then, after a few more hollow whispers, we went padding down our own hall like a pair of housebreakers. I could even feel my heart pounding as we came to Voletta's door. There Owen, with a rather guilty look on his face, listened and waited and finally pressed an ear flat against the panel.

"She's asleep," he whispered to me.

"But are you sure?" I ventured.

Owen nodded.

"I can hear her," was his grimly enunciated whisper. "She's—she's almost snoring."

"If she wakes up," I whispered back, "you'll have to tell her it's a habit. Say you walk that way in your sleep, when you get over-tired and worried."

Owen merely motioned for silence and stood listening for another long minute or two. Taking a deep breath, he ever so carefully clasped the door-handle and as guardedly turned it. He swung back the door, inch by cautious inch. Then, before I quite realized it, he had disappeared in the darkness.

I waited there with my heart in my mouth. I waited so long that I began to advance one crazy theory after another as to just why he didn't come out. I even thought of the Los Angeles real estate operator and shook with a nervous chill. Then, when I was almost ready to burst, the door swung

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open again, inch by guarded inch, and a skulking and shadowy Owen backed slowly out of the room. There was a dangerous light in his eye and his face was wet with sweat. But in his hand he held his precious script.

"I've got it," he triumphantly announced.

"Where was it?" I asked, trying to keep my teeth from chattering.

"She had it in bed with her," was his somewhat indignant whisper. And I wondered, as we went tiptoeing guiltily back to my room, why my liege lord so mistily reminded me of Sextus Tarquinius at Collatium. But he'd had enough of sleeping beauties. For instead of going to bed, he announced that he was going to motor over to Aunt Matilda's and stay there until our house was clear of Voletta Offley.

I tried to argue with him but it was no use. Ten minutes later, I heard him backing out the roadster and incontinently flying from the lady who, one brief day earlier, was to bring him fame and fortune. He went, sullenly and selfishly, leaving me to face the lioness robbed of her cub.

The lioness, it so happened, remained in her lair until high noon. She slept until well after twelve, rang for toast and coffee, sent back the toast because it was buttered, complained to Tillie about the water not running sufficiently hot in the bathroom, and appeared, fully dressed and bejewelled and mascaraed and lipsticked, at about two in the afternoon.

I greeted her smilingly. I even somewhat quaveringly inquired if she had slept well. But, to all intents and purposes, she neither heard nor saw me. It was a habit with the woman.

"Where's Owen?" she demanded, as her maroon-colored limousine slithered up to our humble porte-cochère. And if the face of the liveried potentate on the driver's seat was a resentful one it was due to the fact that our honest Thomas, in honest games of chance, had deprived the maroon-clad visitor of all his money and a perfectly good plate-gold watch—though I had no knowledge of that consoling situation while I stood explaining how an important family matter had called my husband away that morning.

I waited, with my heart skipping a beat, for the next imperial edict from the geranium-tinted lips. Our star was not in the most ebullient of moods. She was paying, obviously, for the exaltation of night before.

"Well, about that play of his," she said, as she studied her face in the maroon-bound mirror. "If he expects me to take that rôle and put the thing over, he'll have to change my second act the way I said and certainly give me a new third-act curtain. He understands that, of course?"

I said I supposed he did.

"And he'd better bring in the script and have me show him where those first-act lines need fattening up," announced Voletta as she applied the jewelled lighter to her cigarette.

"Where—where is the script?" I found the courage to inquire.

She looked at me, as she'd always done, without quite seeing me.

"Somewhere up in the bedroom," she carelessly announced as the chauffeur opened the door of the limousine for her.

But the script, of course, wasn't up in the bedroom. All I found there half an hour later was a residuary odor of Place Vendôme perfume, my apricot-colored nightdress with a hole burned in it, and a five-dollar bill which might have been meant for either me or Tillie.

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SHALL CREATORS OWN THEIR CREATIONS?

by Lyman Beecher Stowe

IF A MAN creates a table he owns that table absolutely. He may sell it or loan it or do what he likes with it. If he buys or raises a horse he owns that horse absolutely. He may sell or rent it as he pleases. If, however, the same man were to create a novel, a biography, a play, a poem or a song his absolute ownership would cease as soon as he published his creation; or, in other words, as soon as he used it for the purpose for which it was made. In order to retain any rights in it after publication he must have it copyrighted. This is a technical process attended to by the publisher or producer. The slightest error in carrying out this technical process invalidates the copyright. The creator then loses his rights in his own creation. Anybody can publish or produce it and pocket all the proceeds. The slip may have been made by an irresponsible clerk in the employ of the publisher or producer. That makes no difference —the author loses his rights just the same. The writer, as former managing editor of a great publishing house, knows from experience that a certain percentage of such mistakes is unavoidable. And every time one occurs some innocent author loses his rights in his literary property. The American author has suffered under this unjust handicap in his own country ever since he first received any protection at all, which was in 1790 when the first Federal copyright law was enacted to carry out the provision of the Constitution which reads as follows:

> The Congress shall have power . . . to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.

If the Vestal Bill which is now before Congress, and which has been recommended by the Committee on Patents of the House of Representatives, after exhaustive hearings becomes a law, American authors will be given an inherent and automatic right in their creations and these time-dishonored risks of authorship will be at last removed.

If the American author desires to sell his product outside his own country he is still further handicapped. The archaic character of our copyright law has made it practically impossible for us to join the International Copyright Union created by the Berne Convention to which all the nations of the world belong except Russia, Siam and ourselves. All authors except the Russians, the Siamese and our own not only have an automatic inherent right in their creations as soon as they have created them but it continues to protect them absolutely after publication or production in all the countries belonging to this union.

Our authors must apply separately for copyright in every foreign country in which they wish to sell their books or produce their plays, which means expending great sums for the employment in each country of a lawyer familiar with the copyright law of that country (there are no lawyers familiar with such laws

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throughout the world). For the ordinary author this represents a quite prohibitive expense. For the big money-making author it usually represents hardly more than a means of exhausting all or most of his probable profits. Yes, there is one other way! He may pose as a British subject and secure the protection of the copyright union in this disguise. Our government has recently been notified, however, that this courtesy protection will no longer be granted. An American author visiting a library in a South American country was told by the librarian that we were apparently producing no literature. To refute this charge the American took from the shelves several books of American authorship. In each case the librarian pointed with triumph to the British copyright line. Ordinarily the author neither goes to this usually prohibitive expense nor hides behind the British lion, with the result that foreigners may and do steal with impunity the creations of his brain. Jack London's books, for instance, have had large European sales on which neither he nor his heirs have received anything. Marc Connelly, author of *The Green Pastures*, stated in testifying in Washington before the Committee on Patents that when his play *Dulcy* was produced in Holland his only compensation was a copy of the program in Dutch with his name misspelled. He added that he had never heard of any American author being paid anything by the Dutch producer of his play. No wonder our plays are popular in Holland!

My grandmother, Harriet Beecher Stowe, had no means of protecting the dramatic rights on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* because the first law to grant such a right was not passed until 1856, four years after the publication of the book. The play, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, is said to have been produced more times than any other play in the history of the world. Mrs. Stowe received absolutely nothing from these almost incredibly numerous performances except a box sent her by the management when the play was given in Hartford, Connecticut, where she lived in her latter years. She invited her neighbor, Charles Dudley Warner, to go as her escort and he always said afterward with a smile that she could not follow the plot. Even under our present law, which was passed way back in 1909, my grandmother would presumably have received nothing on the productions of the play in foreign countries.

Since American authors had no means whatever of securing foreign copyright until 1891, Mrs. Stowe received nothing except a few complimentary checks on the huge foreign sales of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Very roughly estimated these sales during her lifetime ran to about 6,000,000 copies, or about three times as many as the domestic sales. Had she, however, had the advantages of the present or 1909 law I doubt if she would have secured copyright in any foreign country other than England. It is absurd to suppose, in any case, that she could or would have gone to the Herculean effort or excessive expense of securing copyright in the thirty to forty countries in which the book was sold.

The copyright on *Uncle Tom's Cabin* expired two years before the author's death. When she was old and sick and under heavy medical expense she was thereby deprived of the greater part of her income. The period of copyright was then twenty-one years with renewal for a like period. Under the present law it is twenty-eight years with renewal for a similar period. Miss Margaret Widdemer, in her testimony before the Committee on Patents on the Vestal Bill, mentioned that her first and still her best-selling novel, *The Rose Garden Husband*, was published when she was in her early twenties. She commented, . . . "by the time I am incapacitated seriously where would that copyright be? It just won't be". In other words, if she should live to be over eighty, which is the custom in her family, she might suffer the same penalty as did Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Should the Vestal Bill become law it would eliminate the possibility of all such injustices.

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An American author's copyright would be inherent and automatic not only in America but, through its provision for entering the International Copyright Union, in all other countries except Russia and Siam. Also, the term of copyright would be extended to the life of the author and fifty years thereafter. No longer could authors be penalized for writing books of great longevity by being deprived in their old age of the income from the sale of such books.

As Mr. Will Irwin, the Chairman of the Copyright Committee of the Authors' League, said in his statement before the Committee on Patents, "It is as though we were trying to administer traffic in our cities, to regulate traffic with the rise of the automobile, on the traffic laws of 1894". The movies and the radio have developed since the present law was made and television is on the horizon. A novel is usually first sold to a magazine for serial publication. The magazine copyrights the material. By one court decision the magazine thus secures all rights to the use of the material in any manner. A later decision modified this ruling by declaring that while the magazine owner thus secured control of all rights he merely acts as trustee for the author of rights other than the first serial rights which he primarily bought. Authors have made gentlemen's agreements with the honorable and responsible magazine publishers to release to them on request all rights other than the first serial rights. Such agreements have become trade custom among the publishers of good standing. Hence the magazine that has taken out the first copyright on a novel will customarily release on request book rights to the publisher of the material in book form, dramatic rights to the producer of the play based on the material and movie rights to the moving picture producer. But the author enjoys these subsidiary rights, often far more valuable than the original rights, on the sufferance at least to a degree of the magazine which took out the original copyright. The unethical or less ethical magazines, being under no legal obligation to release such rights, sometimes refuse to do so. Then every time a right is released and some further copyright applied for there is the danger of some omission or clerical error which when it occurs and is detected deprives the author of his further rights.

Mr. Chester Crowell, in his testimony before the Patents Committee, told of an instance where he sold for a small amount to a third-rate magazine an article which for some reason the magazine for which it had been written had not taken. This magazine then proceeded to sell the right to digest the article to another magazine for more than they had paid for it.

Miss Margaret Widdemer told of an experience she had with a magazine that ran serially one of her novels. The magazine said: "We always hold three months' copyright on your movie rights before we release them, just as a matter of form". Knowing nothing of the possible dangers in this apparently innocent idiosyncrasy she assented. As a result she lost the movie sale and what amounted to a good many months' income.

These injustices too would be obviated by the Vestal Bill, which would vest all rights inherently and automatically in the author. He would be furnished with facilities for registering his copyright and would be advised to do so, not for the purpose of securing his rights but merely to facilitate their defence should any one try to steal his material.

This bill would give the author not only an inherent and automatic copyright but what is termed a divisible copyright. That means that he could sell his material separately for each type of use such as first serial publication in a magazine, second serial publication in newspapers, dramatic production, moving picture production, radio broadcasting, etc. This is what Mr. Chester Crowell would call the author's right to sell each customer for these successive rights a ride on his literary horse without as heretofore incurring the risk of his horse being either killed or stolen.

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It seems strange that demands so obviously just should have been so long withheld. Apparently authors were long neglected by Congress because they were numerically negligible and pretty generally without the power and prestige of wealth. Of late years, having become essential to the gigantic magazine, theatrical and moving picture industries, they have perhaps been neglected because of their too great importance. That is they have become an integral part of great and necessarily somewhat conflicting interests. Congress quite naturally and reasonably demanded essential unity of purpose among the various interests effected before passing proposed legislation. As a result the Vestal Bill is the outcome of six or eight years of effort to reconcile the conflicting views of these interests. This Bill has finally achieved practically the united backing of all the interests of authors, artists, composers, labor, book publishers, magazine publishers, theatrical producers, moving picture producers and radio broadcasters. As Mr. Elmer Davis said in his testimony before the Vestal Committee, "These are industries representing several billions of dollars of investments whose raw material is subject to copyright. We authors perform the humble but necessary function of providing the raw material on which this formidable pyramid is based". I say the backing for the bill is now practically unanimous. The Shuberts alone remain in opposition. Their opposition slogan is that the proposed law would injure the legitimate drama. This tender solicitude of the Shuberts for the legitimate drama is moving, but let us hope that the members of Congress may be able to steel themselves against this appeal to their esthetic sensibilities.

Incidentally this bill must become law before January 1, 1931, if it is to be fully effective in promoting its purposes. Our invitation to join the Berne Convention and thereby become members of the International Copyright Union on equal terms with the other forty member nations expires at that time.

This bill will come up again in the next Congress, which will convene on or about December first. If every sympathetic reader of this article should before that time write a letter of endorsement either to the Hon. Albert H. Vestal or his or her own Congressman—or, better, to both—the already excellent chances of its passage before the first of the year, or in time to give American authors and composers the full benefits of membership in the International Copyright Union, would be materially improved.

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FICTION

A TRUE STORY *by Stephen Hudson* (KNOPF. $3.50)

THE English writer whose pseudonym is Stephen Hudson has "here reconstructed and reknit" the material of this novel which "was contained in four volumes which have appeared separately under different titles". The book deals with the current conventional unconventionality, revolt, emancipation, and the "dreary joylessness" of naturalistic living. The novelist traces the increasing despair of Richard Kurt, dividing the narrative into three parts corresponding to his relations with his mother, his wife, and his *inamorata*—a "cow-girl, with her codfish mouth and her stupid baby talk". As a boy Richard suffers from neglect in an English home where his father, a severe business man, and his mother, a society woman, have no time for their children. A chasm grows between the materialistic, decorous father and the idealistic, emotional son—a chasm bridged many years later only when they meet over the Monte Carlo gambling tables. The mother's round of social functions estranges her passionately devoted son, who is not without a sort of Œdipus complex, and he hungers for affection among tutors and continental schools. In Part II, while in America he meets Elinor Colhouse, "by nature too cold, too self-interested, too calculating", who takes advantage of his drunken passion and his sense of responsibility to trap him into what he later describes as their loveless, childless twenty years of married life. In Part III, Richard's mother having died without forgiving him, he and Elinor drift about Europe with other pleasure-seekers; they finally build a magnificent villa on Lake Como. Then Richard, "damnably, horribly lonely", assuming a "tolerant indifference" toward his wife's "indiscretions" with "amoral" Reggie Brendon, enters into a grotesque liaison with young Virginia Peraldi, serving maid and daughter of an Italian count. She said she liked "horses and dogs and rowing and sailing and swimming and working with my hands". She does not bring him happiness, however, for he finds her "capable of a deceit deeper than that of a courtesan" and he leaves her at dawn in a Milan hotel with "a deadly feeling of disgust, of repugnance, of loathing". He then literally buys a divorce from Elinor and, hating life, feeling that "one must care for something if it's only a dog", he plans to re-embark on the matrimonial venture.

From the artistic standpoint the story is not without symmetry of structure and a certain beauty born of economy, bareness, lucidity and precision. However since the author's interest seems to be mainly in motivation and in the relation of cause and effect, the thought of the book deserves most attention. While Mr. Hudson seldom rises above the welter of chaos which he presents, seldom gives evidence of having any norm, any constructive and positive conception of central values, it seems to me that he has made a reasonably faithful study—like most modern novelists—of a naturalistic psychology fertile in despair, of a stale eccentricity. It is the old story of the Shelleyan "I-loved-I-know-not-what". The young hero, blessed with health and wealth and brains, diagnoses his own case:

"I am discontented and I am afraid I always shall be because whether I'm right or wrong, I know I want something in every way different from what I've got or ever can get. . . . There

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was always an inside me that wanted something besides [common experiences] entirely different, something that couldn't be explained or done and that wasn't known to me by any particular name. . . . Looking back on my life, I see it like a river separated almost from its source into two streams which keep getting wider apart. And I see that everything I have done all my life, everything I have had to do, has widened that angle and that everything always will widen it. . . . I have to go down this river which always gets broader and uglier and dirtier as it flows on. . . ."

In the course of his ennui and his nostalgic drifting he feels "the spell of the lake"—Lake Como—and "he had found what he desired. This was 'the something else' he had been seeking. . . . He would buy that villa and make it a thing of beauty". He found, however, like other romanticists, that man

> . . . may not hope from outward forms to win
> The passion and the life whose foundations are within.

He realized now that all this beauty and charm of scene, all the idle luxury of his life, had only made its emptiness more apparent. That idea, the seeking an objective cure for a subjective malady, the creating of an atmosphere of happiness out of material things, the building of a shrine for the worship of nothingness, was the greatest illusion of all.

Finally, confessing himself "a despondent, spineless, useless rag of a man", he renders the typical verdict on the fruits of naturalistic living: "Life is hell, bloody hell, nothing but hell". One might think that one step toward the "cure" for the "subjective malady" of this "spineless" drifter would be an assertion of some degree of will, an endeavor to become not the victim but the shaper of circumstances. Mr. Hudson, however, tends to ignore such a "cure", for he—like most modern novelists—is a determinist; indeed, Mr. Edwin Muir, in a warmly appreciative essay, assures us that "This sense of necessity, of cause and effect, is at the centre of Mr. Hudson's vision of life, and he has rejected more and more everything which is irrelevant to it". If the dramatization of the deterministic cult is faithful, one might raise the question as to whether its content is not of negative value: we are instructed how to live so as to get the least satisfaction. If the dramatization itself tends to be drab and monotonous one might consider to what extent this is due to the absence of a clean-cut conflict between wills or between will and circumstance. I raise these questions, because they seem to me portentous to the modern novel in general.

HARRY HAYDEN CLARK

THE AUTOCRACY OF MR. PARHAM
by H. G. Wells (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $1.00)

AFTER many experiments in preaching Utopias, Mr. Wells has somewhat changed his tactics and written what amounts to a good satire topped off with considerable political moralizing. The result is a novel again urging a better world governed by the "released and free acting intelligence of mankind".

Like everything that Mr. Wells writes, *The Autocracy of Mr. Parham* is facilely done. The characters of Mr. Parham, Oxford don and representative of those sound and conservative British doctrines which Mr. Wells dislikes, and of Sir Bussy Woodcock, who for all his obtuseness possesses that Wellsian wisdom alleged to lie in a bold intellectualism, are sharply and effectively drawn. But they are, of course, mere effigies which the author buffets or caresses according to his thesis.

The device used in this novel for achieving the utopian lesson is amusing. Drawn into a séance, Mr. Parham is seized by the ectoplasm of the spirit which dominated all the great conquerors from Alexander to Napoleon. Once this spirit is within him, all Mr. Parham's British notions are turned into action. The result is world war and international chaos. Even if the whole thing is a dream, Mr. Wells manages to tell his parable and illustrate his text.

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The satire in the book is diverting, the fantasy interesting; but the thesis, like that in Mr. Wells's other novels, we suspect of being unsound. At the risk of being accused of agreeing with Mr. Parham, we must say that Mr. Wells's confidence in "free acting intelligence" and his opposition to tradition, discipline, and obedience to the age-old lessons of mankind are no less visionary than the lands in which his rules of life apply.

Mr. Wells may have drawn here a world as he and certain others would like to have it be, but there is much doubt whether such a world is remotely possible or even ideal, that is to say, a world as it should be.

Like other readers, we lament the passing of the purely fantastic Wells, or the Wells who wrote *Tono-Bungay*.

ALAN BURTON CLARKE

MOUNTAIN CITY *by Upton Sinclair* (BONI. $2.50)

IT WOULD be interesting to know how many people today are reading Upton Sinclair's novels as they come from his typewriter; not reading the jacket blurb and a few chapters to discover how the story begins and ends, nor merely buying the latest book to keep the Sinclair shelf in the bookcase up to date, but actually reading them through. It would be interesting to know also what Mr. Sinclair assumes are the kinds of people who comprise his audience, what he thinks of them in the mass and what he believes his service to them to be in the composition of a novel such as *Mountain City*. There would seem to be some doubt whether he pauses to consider what the individual reader, with his outlook and mental processes, may be like. If he thinks of his audience in the mass, it is not impossible that he has permitted himself to grow rather far away from this mass, so that his impression of its collective responses to life and literature has become vague and no longer trustworthy. Though *Mountain City* deals with individuals, in the elucidation of extremely general ideas, the individuals are not clearly seen nor felt. They are, however, important instrumentally, and the lack of any impression of real flesh or emotion in the treatment of their lives is so marked that these questions about Mr. Sinclair's own sense of his public are raised almost inevitably, the more so since Mr. Sinclair has been credited with a public even by people who would not credit him with a great deal else.

As literature, this novel is something like the Horatio Alger stories of an earlier day. It tends to be as lax as a schoolboy's letter to his chum, on the one hand, and at the same time there is something distinctly stilted about the style of the writing and thinking on many pages. There is quite a little dialogue in the book; and if a boy from ten to twelve years old were to take it into his head to write a sketch or short story he would be quite likely to write dialogue superior to this in conviction and serviceability, mainly for the reason that the boy would probably see and hear his characters more clearly than Mr. Sinclair does. If in shunning the art of writing Mr. Sinclair believes he has arrived at the hard natural speech of the street or the prairie, he is in error. His inclination is to revert rather to a pretentiousness of style associated with the transitory popular fiction of the seventies and eighties. The prose of Pater is exciting in one way; prose based on the vernacular—racy and self-sufficient—is exciting in another way. But discipline is as essential in the one case as in the other, even when an author has an easy sense of the true values of natural speech, seemingly so lacking in Mr. Sinclair's case. It is sometimes possible to excuse dull writing because of some force or other quality in the story or idea that is being set down. But Mr. Sinclair's treatment of Jed Rusher, as a symbol of the greed and anti-social power-urge must be called superficial, if not naïve, in our day.

Mountain City resembles the Alger stories also in being a "success" story. Jed, born in a hut in the cattle country, becomes an oil

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magnate. The difference is that Jed is Mr. Sinclair's villain, of course, not his hero. The climax of the story is reached when Jed, by knavish trickery, makes himself the husband of Lulu Belle, a Goldilocks sort of damsel and an heiress to vast wealth. She is fifteen years old. An impoverished student, Jed has been employed as attendant to her grandfather. His first great opportunity comes when Lulu Belle says to him one day:

"Oh, Mr. Rusher, Mamma told me about where babies come from! . . . Did you know about that, Mr. Rusher?"

"Yes, I knew about it," Jed said. His neck was on fire, and the flames were spreading to his ears, to his cheeks. A swift glance showed that he and Lulu Belle were alone.

. . . "She wouldn't tell me how you come to have a baby," Lulu Belle said. "How is it, Mr. Rusher? Does it just happen, or is it something you have to do?"

Silence! The flames had reached Jed's forehead now.

Jed, however, is not destined to complete Lulu's education, though we are told that he "wrestled with these problems for more than twenty-four hours before their dark and sinister aspects flashed upon his mind". In fact: "Yes, if he married the only child of Wallace J. Macy, he would have the equivalent of a kingdom and be set upon the road to conquer others—no doubt of that!"

Here, in addition, we have "a storm wind shaking the trees along the street and a storm of desires shaking Jed's soul". On the following page there are "thunder rolling in the sky above Jed Rusher's head, and an earthquake in the undermost deeps of him".

. . . Pale and inconsequential seemed college. . .

And now Jed sees little Lulu again:

. . . "Oh, Mr. Rusher!" The child looked at him with serious wide blue eyes. "I've already found out."

"You have?"

"Yes. I met a boy, and I asked him about it, and he told me."

. . . "He told you? And then?"

"Well, he said what we would have to do for me to have a baby, and he seemed to know all about it, so we did it."

These conversations continue for some time. Finally, with the tacit consent of stupid little Lulu, Jed contrives to make himself the child's husband, by threatening her mother with arrest if she causes an abortion to be performed, and by pretending to be Lulu's guilty lover. Thus made a member of the Macy family, Jed becomes very wealthy. But, by the time he becomes a financial power and a "great man" in his own right, Lulu meets a man she really loves. Jed consents to a divorce when Lulu offers to surrender her share of their fortune.

This selection of material for quotation must not be thought facetious; it seems merely the most obvious and easiest way to indicate the quality of *Mountain City* as a work of fiction. Passages dealing directly with other phases of life in contemporary America, whether politics, finance, law, education or poverty, are treated, likewise, in a fashion which would cause the work to be described not only as dull but shoddy in the case of almost any other writer today. Such facts about contemporary society as are set forth in this meandering chronicle, moreover, have been part of the general body of popular knowledge of the adult population, and all inquisitive children, for some time. Any moral value inherent in the story of the rise of Jed Rusher, and the attendant exposure of iniquities in our economic and political system, is dissipated by a manner of presentation which can no longer be serviceable for any purpose, narrative or intellectual, however rudimentary the aim.

It can hardly be preposterous to conclude that Mr. Sinclair has permitted the distance that stands between any author and his auditors to widen, in his case, until the inertia that continually besets the popular imagination no longer exists for him as a perpetual challenge; if an author ceases to address him-

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self to a tangible public, his standards of literary communication are certain to lapse. Mr. Sinclair presumably thinks of himself as addressing, first of all, the toiling population, not only of America but of all countries. Perhaps he has fallen into the habit of writing "down" to that population, a habit which in all periods of history has been more devitalizing for everybody concerned than that other habit—not so different in origin as it might seem—of writing "up" to the intellectuals.

STIRLING BOWEN

EGYPTIAN PORTRAIT *by C. W. Grundy* (DUTTON. $2.50)

PERHAPS because an adult knows so much less about childhood than might be expected, many novels seem at their best while dealing with the earliest youth of their protagonists. As long as the characters are kept young enough, they seem rare individuals. Then the boys and girls reach school, university, love, maturity. They are only like everybody else. The book is put down. The first few chapters remain in the memory. The body of the story (to which the first is only introductory) is forgotten. So with Ahmed. As a street gamin of Cairo, he is memorable. As soon as he gets to Oxford—the sports, the learning, the immature political discussions, the girl artist—he fades slightly. This girl, Morelle, he marries and takes back to Egypt. There, with his law degree, he is able to make a good living. Soon he has to choose between making an even better living and defending the poor of the city (and he himself had been born poor) who cannot pay. He chooses the latter course. To his European wife, he seems to be growing more and more Egyptian—degenerating, as she thinks, from his English days. The break between them at the end is so inevitable, and so little loss to either, that it is hardly tragic. Ahmed has chosen Egypt. Morelle has chosen France. The story is readable, but not "compelling".

A FLOCK OF BIRDS *by Kathleen Coyle* (DUTTON. $2.50)

THIS story of how a woman passes the few days from the time of her son's death-sentence to the day of his hanging is suffused with pain and poetry. The scene is Dublin, and the year 1919, during the Black and Tan régime. So it is no ordinary convict and no ordinary mother who hold center-stage for the brief time covered by the book. Everything is done to save the condemned man. All Ireland is aroused. His young fiancée, his sister, his brother, his friends, are all feverishly at work. But Catherine Munster, his mother, seems emotionally paralyzed. She can do about as she has always done, and think almost the same thoughts and beyond is a depth of despair and suffering waiting for her. Instinctively she defends herself from actually taking in what is happening to her most-loved child and to her own life.

The nervous tense style is suited to the psychological matter of book. With Mrs. Munster our minds turn hither and yon—to hats and dogs and household linen—rather than to think too long on the young man with the shaven head, sitting in the foul-smelling death-cell. The book is full of finesse and is intricate in its detail. Although in no way a copy of anything, it recalls the work of Virginia Woolf.

A FAMILY THAT WAS *by Ernest Raymond* (APPLETON. $2.50)

Two girls and three boys make up the very English "family that was". It is a pre-war family, for the story stops with 1915. The remote, unhappy woman who is the mother, the wordy rector of St. Austin's who is the father, are little more than background for Keating and Joyce and Derek, Peggy and Tony. But the story is principally of Tony, the youngest. His boyhood, adolescence and early manhood are reviewed with delicacy, perception, perhaps with too great tenuosity.

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He is a good boy, idealistic, protected and almost perennially young—essentially as young at twenty-four as at four. It is hard to realize that men the age of Tony have been, in other civilizations, great generals, captains of clipper ships, scholars. Life opens up slowly to the young man but it leads him nowhere. He goes further and further into a gentle disillusionment—disappointment. Things are not as he would wish—neither men nor women, nor poetry, nor God. He has married the one girl he wanted most, he is pretty successful at his teaching, yet nothing means much to him; he sees life, pale and wan, stretching before him. And then the war. "I'm grateful to this war for one thing at least," he says on his way to the Front. "It has suddenly drawn life in a larger manner for us."

WHILE GONDOLAS PASS *by Helen Mackay* (APPLETON. $2.00)

As THE title suggests, this is a story of Venice. The gondolas pass with their gay, wealthy foreigners, but what of the sons and daughters of Venice—too poor to ride in the extravagant "blackbirds" of the canals? Such a one is Za-Bi—which is a diminutive of her nickname, Zampetta Bianca, "little white paws". As a child she had fastidiously disliked dirt. That is why she was thus nicknamed. Poverty and fastidiousness are cruel masters of a girl's fate. Za-Bi, herself a child, is left in position of mother to a considerable brood of brothers and sisters. They become the absorbing passion of her life. For them she slaves as a servant in a hospital, then in a hotel on the Lido, without ever having enough clothing to keep warm or enough food to satisfy hunger. In the one place, she is loved by a student, in the other by a young waiter. But her poverty, her fastidiousness, her responsibilities all work against her happiness. The story is strictly sentimental—but if one can not be sentimental about a beautiful young girl's sad life in Venice, when can one be? Told always from the slant of an older woman visiting now and then in Venice, the sentimentality seems an integral—perhaps charming—part of the story.

ESTHER FORBES

APPLES BE RIPE *by Llewelyn Powys* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.50)

CHRIS HOLBECH issued from the hand of God into a world that was bent on keeping up appearances. The pantheistic son of an Anglican clergyman, he wooed and won to wife a girl of Hellenic physique and quite Victorian prejudices—who cringed from his hearty earthliness as from something that was beastly and un-English. Adela was lovely, but Adela was adamant; her training and tradition insisted that English country gentlemen must not behave like laborers to their wives. And as Adela's forbidding stand was bolstered by stolid and opinionated relatives and friends, poor Holbech, whose patience was broken, walked out under the stars one night with only a serving maid and his own honest lechery for company.

It was the last the community saw of him alive.

But Holbech with wind and rain on his face, walked and worked his way up and down the countryside, playing a little tune on a pocket flute—to the music of which Mr. Powys has set some very lewd lines—making love in the shadow of hayricks, and tasting to the full the natural pleasures of being alive.

In course of time Chris Holbech died, and his eyes were like high windy places. His bones were set stiffly in the earth to sprout and blossom.

Llewelyn Powys has cultivated his understanding; he suffers fools gladly. His way with the Philistine is calm; his rebuke is tempered. He is of those who look for no paradise not of this earth; who aspire to no ecstasy not compounded of things of the present. And in this slight novel he has again stated his case.

LEO KENNEDY

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SHEPHERDS IN SACKCLOTH *by Sheila Kaye-Smith* (HARPERS. $2.50)

NOT since we read *Joanna Godden* has a novel by Sheila Kaye-Smith touched us more poignantly than this latest romance of hers—*Shepherds in Sackcloth*. Once more she uses as background that countryside, deep pastoral Surrey, which is as surely hers as modern London is Galsworthy's. For stage she takes a shabby rectory with its garden and its environs, and throws upon it the interwoven story of young love—passionate, forbidden, doomed—and the inner religious conflict of an old English priest. Quietly, with exquisite characterization and perfect rhythm, her people, the sweet and holy rector and his wife, Theresa of the flaming hair and the child's heart, George, the strange ungainly revivalist who cannot resist the appeal of Theresa's loveliness, move with classic tread to inevitable tragedy.

There is never in this writer's work anything sensational either in her premises or in her story's development. But then, there is nothing sensational about the progress of most human lives as they are lived off the front pages of our daily press. Here, in this book, as in millions of spots on earth, the business—pitiful and gorgeous—of daily existence is established. The design of the plot forms itself out of the very soil with apparent unconsciousness. This, of course, is the acme of fine technique. Theresa, sacrificing her life for the ecstasy of a scarcely comprehended passion, is a figure that stands out clearly defined. She is real. We feel, as we read, a desire to protect and warn her—no small achievement for any author. The theological controversies which form part of the problems of the two men—the rector, and George, the "vagabond shepherd of a flock of goats"—cast interesting sidelights on the unceasing questions which harry the Church of England; and on all counts the author's religion is tolerant, human, wise, and adds to the novel an atmosphere of substance and significance. Sheila Kaye-Smith, an English novelist of the highest rank, is a person to be thankful for, and one whose compassionate criticism of life deserves wide consideration.

LYNN ANDERSON

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER *by Vernon Bartlett* (STOKES. $2.00)

THE co-author of *Journey's End* knows war at its truest. He knows its brutish boredom and futility, its senseless monotony and perverseness. In *The Unknown Soldier*—a finely conceived and in spots succesfully depicted tragedy—he has chosen a nameless hero to typify the countless millions of unheroic ordinary beings who carry on its business.

Architectonically the work is simple. The hero is ordered to lead a raid on a German trench to capture some prisoners. While preparations are in progress, a German private falls into the hands of an English patrol. The raid is called off. But the cancellation order reaches its final destination three minutes after the raiding-party has gone over the top without the customary protective barrage. The hero, gravely wounded, awakens in a shell-hole where he must wait until dusk to be picked up by his men. The long agonizing wait provides the psychological background on which, as upon a screen, the hero's consciousness, his memories, reactions and ratiocinations are thrown.

While yet a child the hero was told by a gypsy fortune-teller that "the great men of the world would bow down before him". His one ambition had been to fulfil that prophecy. War taught him the crushing truth that "the individual does not count". Yet at every instant, even amidst the cruel insensibilities of war, the individual is forever preoccupied with himself, his dreams, his fears, his illusions about his destiny. It is this that gives our hero the strength and courage to anticipate his rescue. After sundown he drags himself over to his trench, is mistaken for a German and shot by his own comrades. The

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nameless hero, by implication, becomes the Unknown Soldier, the embodiment of anonymity, of impersonality, of sacrifice, before whom, indeed, the great of the earth bow down. But above this tragic irony of fate it is suggested that the Unknown Soldier is a fiction which civilized creatures have invented to gain vicarious atonement for and absolution from their personal blame in an ungodly and inhuman business.

LOUIS RICH

THE PATRIOT'S PROGRESS *by Henry Williamson* (DUTTON. $2.50)

THE World War has been presented to us, in the past two years, from all angles—as it was seen in France or Gallipoli, in Russia or South Africa, in the trenches or from the air, according to the points of view of privates or subalterns, aviators or orderlies, nurses or noncombatants. When the saturation point in war literature will be reached, or if it has already been reached, one does not know. But it seems certain, at any rate, that this really fine war novel by Henry Williamson has been brought to birth much too late to receive the attention it manifestly deserves. In spite of the clarity and competence with which Mr. Williamson approaches his subject, the reader can hardly be blamed for finding this Odyssey of a British private faintly repetitious.

John Bullock, the unheroic and commonplace hero of *The Patriot's Progress*, is a London clerk, an honest and unimaginative youth who hastened to enlist at the outbreak of the war for fear that the hostilities might end before he had had any fun. Insignificant and rather stolid, he permitted himself to be shunted through bewildering months of training, without questioning in his own mind the essential wisdom or justice of anything which fell to his lot. He learned physical hardship, humiliation, the loss of his personal privacy. In France he endured the strain of uncertainty and the emotional ravages wrought by the more or less constant imminence of death. He went through a nightmare of a hopeless attack, was wounded, and had a leg amputated in a field hospital. Restored to a mockery of health, he was sent back to England on crutches.

The effect of the war upon his healthy, uninquisitive animal organism is horrible and inescapable. Neither a hero nor a coward, equipped neither for reflection nor revolt, John Bullock remains a perfect epitome of the commonplace, a median line drawn through humanity's dead level. His tragedy lies, in part at least, in his very uncomplaining incomprehension of his own tragedy. Told with a cold, unsparing objectivity, his story achieves a power which would have eluded a more purple writing. But the final touch of the book, magnificently and artistically conclusive as it is, is nevertheless out of character. On Armistice Day, an officious gentleman, inquiring into the loss of Bullock's leg, says to him: "We'll see that England doesn't forget you fellows". Not unkindly, but with crushing brevity, Bullock replies, "We are England".

MARGARET WALLACE

HYMN TO THE SUN *by Malcolm Ross* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.50)

THE coast of Labrador associated vaguely with Eskimos and missionaries, seems hardly the locale for any sort of grand passion, yet Mr. Ross has managed to make it very much a land of human emotions.

Were it not for the setting, the story would lack any unusual quality, for the plot itself is the eternal triangle, a married woman, her husband and "the other man". In Labrador, however, the conflict becomes a struggle of man against nature, as well as man with man.

Tom Steele, yachting with friends along the Labrador coast, sees and immediately falls in love with the young wife of the missionary doctor. She is lonely, and in a weak moment responds to his kiss. After a disagreement with his host, Steele makes superhuman efforts to leave the yacht and re-

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turn to the doctor's station. When he realizes the folly of his undertaking it is too late to turn back, and he follows the hospital into the interior, at the risk of his life, to be with Louisa Grahame. The outcome of his effort to win her from her husband is not certain until the end of the novel. Long before that is reached the reader feels that he, as well as Steele, has become acquainted with the bitter country, has known its harshest moments and has felt its glamour.

The sympathies of the reader shift from Steele, who knows what he wants and goes blindly after it, to the doctor, certainly the better man, and, at the end, back to Steele. Louisa fails to materialize into a definite personality. The novel has moments of high drama; at no time is it dull. The story moves along in as swift a fashion as though it were not set in an ice-locked land where there are no taxis, newspapers or the modern conveniences for love-making.

LOVE BY ACCIDENT *by Louis Marlow* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

THAT tragic causes often have farcical effects might be taken as the theme of a book which, with a jacket by Peter Arno, a title fit for a light Broadway show, and a hero whose evasions of the advances of the opposite sex are grotesquely ludicrous, is as strange a mixture of the comic and serious as even life can present.

Mr. Marlow's ointment is so smooth that one really does not mind the fly. In fact, given such flies, and novels are full of them, they are not bad at all, taken with this recipe. Which is an indirect way of saying that this combination of pleasure and business is far from disagreeable. For business it is, there is no question about that. Tony Buckram, in his middle twenties, is as big a problem as ever was blamed, *e pluribus unum,* upon the war. For Tony, instead of being over-sexed, as is the greater part of the post-war generation in literature, has sex impulses so easily deflected that he is at once a despair to his men friends and a challenge to the women.

Mafalda, the vivacious young widow, was flattered when Tony entered her bedroom. "My sheets," he explained; "they're so cold and damp. Yours look so snug, I wonder if . . ." "Certainly," said Mafalda kindly, taking one of the pillows from behind her and putting it by her side. This was quite a new approach, she thought, most engaging. "Of course," she jested, "you could always sleep in your blankets." "By Jove," said Tony, "so I could." So he went back to his own bed and slept in his blankets.

Has Tony merely no sense of sin, or does he lack energy for coming to grips with life, as a friend suggests? The explanation is interpolated in chapters concerning Tony's boyhood, when, growing up during the war, he faced problems too big for him: a father hated for his pacifism, a brother who kills himself because he is diseased, and the overthrow of all stable impressions.

He had to keep himself numb, you see. But it was numbness; it wasn't atrophy. He was able all right, under his numbness. That must have frightened him sometimes. A secret and immense conviction—did he have that?—that the more actively you went for life, and the more you took of it, the worse it was for you.

It is hard to say whether this theory would stand up under a psychiatrist's diagnosis. Mr. Marlow, however, has tried an experiment that is interesting and refreshing. The combination of seriousness and humor is effective and the author has once again proved himself a good student of human nature.

MYRA M. WATERMAN

GREAT SEA STORIES OF ALL NATIONS. *Edited by H. M. Tomlinson* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $5.00)

THERE have been collections of sea stories before, but never one to stand with this. In its eleven hundred pages lovers of the sea, and of adventure (true and fictional) will

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find over one hundred and sixty selections from the literature of more than a score of countries, including everything from Jonah's voyage to Conrad and Masefield. Miss Elizabeth D'Oyley, to whom Tomlinson passes the palm for the actual making of the collection, is to be particularly congratulated on the high literary quality of the whole volume. So intelligent and so comprehensive are her selections that *Great Sea Stories of All Nations* will probably remain for years a classic in the realm of sea books.

In his introduction, a spirited essay on the joys of remembered adventures and the magic to be found in sea stories, Tomlinson expresses the hope that this book will lure readers back to its sources, to the works of the novelists, explorers and adventurers from which it is drawn. It will certainly lure those whose nostrils dilate at the smell of the sea on the printed page. Besides passages they may already cherish, such as Moby Dick's last fight, Marlow's triumphant lifeboat command, from *Youth*, and the gunner's fight with the carronade that had broken loose in Hugo's *Ninety-Three*, they will find innumerable tales and narratives that are new to them, and discover too that Britain and America are not the only lands that have mastered the sea in literature, that have bred a race of sea heroes.

The editors have naturally included more tales from Great Britain than from any other country, ranging through the whole course of history from Beowulf and Hakluyt to Marryat, Stevenson and Conrad. The publishers, however, have been slightly overzealous in featuring the name of McFee on the jacket and title-page, since no story of his appears in the collection. Only three other good British writers of the sea have been omitted: William Clark Russell, whose *Wreck of the Grosvenor* is a minor classic; Rex Clements, whose *Gipsy of the Horn* is well thumbed by every sea lover; and Kipling who, judging from a word in the introduction, would not permit anything of his to be used. But while their absence may be regretted, readers cannot with justice complain, and will not, I am sure, when they sit down to this rich feast of sea lore and literature. The volume is well worth adding to anyone's library.

WILLIAM HOWELL WELLS

THE TRIUMPHANT FOOTMAN *by Edith Olivier* (VIKING. $2.50)

MISS OLIVIER'S book comes as a relief from the many novels that try to be serious and fail. The author sets out to write light fiction and succeeds.

Alphonse Biskin, of French and Cockney English parentage, starts life adventure-bent. Successively as artist's model, servant of a Spanish grandee, footman and private secretary of Mrs. Lemaur, sole legatee of the lady he served, and finally bogus French count living in an English manor, Alphonse is enabled both to satisfy his craving for spectacular excitement and to acquire the *savoir faire* that gives verisimilitude to his various impersonations.

Through the central figure of one absurd situation after another, Alphonse Biskin is hazily sketched. Because of his shadowy qualities, the story is not so amusing as it should be. The method is too objective, and the scenes are frequently flattened by narrative when action and dialogue would sharpen the effect. A more careful delineation of Alphonse himself would heighten the reader's interest in the situations he produces. The value of the novel, therefore, is distinctly more cinematic than literary. On the screen its presentation would be highly diverting. Mirabelle de Bisque, whom the gay Alphonse marries, is also shadowy.

Three of the minor characters, however, are delightfully drawn: Mrs. Lemaur who "fidgeted like a piece of torn wall paper" as she lay on her sofa, "squeaking like a mouse and with a mouse's view of life"; Mrs. Lemaur's husband, the Captain, who arranged

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his life in such a way as to keep his wife from "getting tired"; and the poor little Count Pendini, for whom specimens of butterflies filled the place of wife and child.

The structure of the plot is good. Having ascended rung by rung, Alphonse is sitting on the top of his little ladder with Mirabelle beside him when Nemesis in the form of the Count, who had suffered because of Alphonse's first impersonation, overtakes the hero. Alphonse, the gay deceiver, is forced to confess to his bride that he started his career as a flunkey. Mirabelle, however, playing into the hands of her creator, is delighted to discover that she has married an unblushing adventurer—and the story ends on a high note of happiness.

The author has re-created the atmosphere of the nineties skilfully. The garish furniture, with its coverings of plum-colored velvet, the jewellery worn in dazzling quantities, the costumes, the coiffures, and the elaborate, though decorous, social gatherings are depicted accurately and entertainingly. *The Triumphant Footman* can be recommended to those in need of an evening's recreation.

EUDORA RAMSAY RICHARDSON

TATTER'D LOVING *by Phyllis Bottome* (HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN. $2.00)

THE insatiable, beautiful and fragile Vera Middleton, divorced from Sir William and married to his best friend Edward, discovers after thirteen years that her life is not complete without Ariadne, daughter by her first marriage. But Ariadne cannot be appropriated, nor can Vera forgive herself for introducing youth—and a rival—into a childless household. Eventually she bows down to other truths. *Tatter'd Loving* is pitched in a key both worldly and ethereal. Strauss and Debussy. Truth and Beauty. Ariadne's Tom is the most delicious description in the book, and the polite clash between Tom and Vera the most effective exposé of Vera that the author could have invented. "A large formidable animal not sufficiently tamed" was Tom, "too big for the room", to whom the doting mother, with her cruelties in showing up his crudities, seemed invisible. "Once or twice his eyes fixed themselves on Ariadne with the expression of a good dog watching for the signal which precedes a walk. He wasn't going to hurry her but he hoped she would give him the signal soon."

Miss Bottome's subtlety, her brilliant force, her exquisite grace and impeccable taste, the calm astuteness which identifies so many of her previous books, are all here.

CLARICE LORENZ AIKEN

THAT OTHER LOVE *by Geoffrey Moss* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $1.00)

ONCE upon a time Geoffrey Moss wrote *Defeat*, a volume of short stories about post-war Germany which were exceptionally promising. It was a promise unattended by performance. His novels have been tedious affairs, which approximated roughly to a devitalized English clubman's version of *Flaming Youth*. *That Other Love* represents some advance. It is the story of a young woman's passion for an older one, and is treated with decency and restraint; moreover Vera Caswell, the older woman, is not unlike a living person. The other characters never come alive, and with the features of their death we are too familiar. That is Geoffrey Moss's trouble—he presents a surface identical with that of a hundred other novels, mostly written by Englishmen, where the difference of plot and character is the merest accident; a surface competently executed and with some pretence to cleverness, but which, one feels, somewhat thinly covers that chaos which Milton called "the vast inane".

THE ANVIL *by Gustav Frenssen*. (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

Two special characteristics mark *The Anvil* —organization and caricature. It is a very long novel, crowded with characters, but there is

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no jostling or confusion. For Frenssen is a peasant of Low Saxon origin, writing about Low Saxon peasantry and near-peasantry, and his novel is informed with that peculiar rhythm, closely related to the movements of days and seasons, which seems to be inseparable from genuine peasant life. Frenssen's presentation, again, is not unlike that of Charles Dickens (one might go further and say that astonishing comparisons can be drawn between them), because, like Dickens, he is a caricaturist. You notice the same repetitious insistence upon one characteristic at the expense of the others, the same blend of sentiment and cruelty; and if Frenssen's characters have a more noticeable angularity, it is because he is handling a cruder material, and because caricature—the sort of caricature, I mean, which as far as English is concerned scarcely survived Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*—comes naturally to him as a German. With Dickens it was artificial and urbane.

The central theme of *The Anvil* is the development of Otto Babendiek from the blacksmith's son of Stormfeld in Schleswig-Holstein to the novelist of international reputation. The first half, which deals with Otto's childhood and adolescence is something of a masterpiece. Otto is less hero than interpreter. Through his passionate interest in human affairs we see the melancholy, secrecy and physical vigor of a whole race. In the second half, which deals with his marriage and war experiences, Otto becomes the hero, the peasantry of Schleswig-Holstein retires into the background, and *The Anvil* abruptly declines into merely a good story. As a caricaturist, certainly, Frenssen gives us a picture of war which is not unlike a *Simplicissimus* cartoon, a gaunt picture of starvation urged into some sort of movement by the constant invasion of sudden death. Nevertheless, he begins by unfolding a great story and ends by offering an ordinarily good one, because he cannot resist making a virtue of his weakness—and his weakness is something not unlike garrulity.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

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BIOGRAPHY

THE LATER YEARS OF THOMAS HARDY: 1892–1928 *by Florence Emily Hardy* (MACMILLAN. $5.00)

MRS. HARDY'S second and concluding volume carries the biography of her husband from the publication of *Jude* and his disgust at its critical reception through the later years of fame and quiet devotion to poetry. It was a life of few external events; and Mrs. Hardy has wisely given much space to excerpts from Hardy's diary and letters. Her wisdom is the greater inasmuch as her narrative style is to say the least, uninspired; and as concerning her personal relations to Hardy and knowledge of the intimacies of his character she has maintained a reticence doubtless estimable, but disappointing. She gives simply the bare record of facts, anecdotes and documents. Thus, though dull as narrative, the biography is invaluable as a source book.

Through the bare record we get glimpses of the man. One quality that is notable is his love for all the arts, shown by his constant visits to galleries, attendance at concerts and reflections on poetry; by even his delight in dancing, as an old man, the intricate steps of his childhood. His continual interest in old churches, partly explained by his architectural training, and his deep love for church music are evidence of a strong inclination toward the esthetic aspects of religion. He once regretted that he had not taken orders as he had planned in his youth, and several times Mrs. Hardy records his wish that the services of the Church of England might be reformed so as to be intellectually as well as emotionally acceptable. Indeed, in commenting on the hard names he had been called—atheist, infidel, pessimist, etc.—he is quoted as saying that he might have more plausibly been called "churchy"—"not in an intellectual sense, but in so far as instincts and emotions ruled".

Most valuable to the critic are the records of Hardy's thoughts about his work, particularly about the philosophy underlying *The Dynasts*. A similarity to the thought of Schopenhauer, which Mr. Ernest Brennecke has studied, is here further manifested. Believing like the philosopher in an unconscious "Will" of the universe as the ultimate reality, Hardy advances in *The Dynasts* to a fancy which partly justifies his claim to being not a pessimist but an "evolutionary meliorist"—the fancy that this Will, unconscious originally, is growing aware of itself. He also fancies that individuals may have a "limited" freedom of action at times when "all the rest of the Great Will is in equilibrium". But alas, for such fancies! The great war, according to Mrs. Hardy, "destroyed all Hardy's belief in the gradual ennoblement of man".

Hardy early accepted as fact man's oneness with the natural world, as science assumed it; but his intellectual creed came into conflict with his imaginative sympathy, resulting, as Robert Shafer has pointed out, in a painful contradiction throughout his work. And his life, though passed in quietude, friendship and the greatest honor, was darkened by moods of bitterness and stoic despair. His last intellectual act was to ask that this quatrain be read to him:

Oh, Thou, who man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd—Man's forgiveness give—and take!

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

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LORD MELBOURNE *by Bertram Newman* (MACMILLAN. $4.50)

IF HE was not a great statesman, in the ordinary meaning of the term, Viscount Melbourne, Queen Victoria's first prime minister, was certainly a most lovable one. He was never a popular national figure, for he lacked those ostentatious qualities which appeal to the popular imagination; and he had no great talent for creative statecraft. But behind his languid, well-bred manner and his paradoxical speech lay a fine judgment, a cool, analytical mind, and a heart which was very certainly far from cool. Profoundly sceptical of the social order which he represented, Melbourne devoted himself disinterestedly to its preservation, and while his achievements were not of an enduring order the facts remain that he kept his government together for nearly seven years, and that he guided England through one of the most trying periods of her political history.

The Lamb family, of which Melbourne was a younger son, was neither old nor illustrious, but it had managed in the course of two or three generations to accumulate a fortune and a peerage. Melbourne was not a favorite of his father, a fact which lends color to Greville's story that he was actually the illegitimate son of the glittering Earl of Egremont. However that may have been, his prospects were glowing enough, for he was endowed not only with wealth and position but with a very considerable personal charm. His marriage with the beautiful, eccentric Lady Caroline Ponsonby provided him with the most advantageous parliamentary connections, but turned his personal life to tragedy. Lady Caroline's liaison with Byron, and the publicity which attended it, the deaths of two of her children and the hopeless imbecility of the third, might permanently have embittered another man than Melbourne. But that he was not embittered is demonstrated by the mellowness of his humor and his tolerant, unfailing sympathy.

The material of Melbourne's life offers considerable temptation to the sensational biographer, and Mr. Newman deserves great credit for his careful, impartial and admirably discreet treatment of it. Under his hands the Victorian premier emerges as a human, recognizable, and more than ordinarily appealing person.

MAZZINI'S LETTERS *translated by Alice de Rosen Jervis with an introduction by Bolton King* (DUTTON. $2.40)

IN A DAY so soundly practical as ours, these letters by Giuseppe Mazzini have a decidedly unfamiliar and archaic flavor. Selected from the vast correspondence of the most industrious of all Italian patriots, they reveal the mind and heart of an intrepid idealist, of a man whose belief in the moral principles of the universe was profound and important enough to work and starve and fight for endlessly. Mazzini was a man of wide learning, of deep religious convictions, and of sincere human sympathies. But he rigorously subordinated these qualities to his active concept of duty. "A man's business is not to save his soul, not to lead a passively good life, hardly even to write and preach ideals if his work stops at that, but to translate every thought of good, come what may, into action. The moral man cannot be sundered from the practical or political man." Thus Mazzini, physically frail, and at heart a gentle and humanitarian philosopher, transformed himself, by the strength of his moral purpose, into a tireless and implacable revolutionist.

These letters, many of them exceedingly beautiful in expression, have been excellently chosen for the American reader. Addressed to his mother, to Giuditta Sidoli, the woman he loved, to his political associates, both Italian and English, to George Sand in France and to Ernst Haug in Germany, to Jane Carlyle, Daniel Stern, and many others, they reflect completely both Mazzini's public life and his private mind. But always, and for what-

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ever purpose they may have been written, they manifest that clear, implicit, and somewhat touching faith which was the guiding principle of Mazzini's life. "For people in general," he wrote to Eleonora Curlo Ruffini, "life is a question of happiness or unhappiness, a strife against inevitable sorrows . . . therefore they give and accept the common consolations of necessity, time, and what not. They all look upon life as something human, and it is all very well for them; but you and I look upon life as *something divine,* as a mission, and nothing short of that."

JOSEPH FOUCHÉ: THE PORTRAIT OF A POLITICIAN *by Stefan Zweig* (VIKING. $3.50)

STEFAN ZWEIG has chosen for his latest study a figure from the French Revolution—a half-forgotten figure, fascinating in the manifold contradictions of his character and in his studied and self-willed obscurity. It is hardly remarkable that Joseph Fouché's contemporaries found him incomprehensible. Even now his career appears unimaginably devious and incalculable; and his biographer, with all the records at hand, has experienced obvious difficulty in piecing together a coherent account of it. Yet the temptations of the theme are undeniable. Almost any reader would wish to know more of the man of whom Napoleon said, "I have known only one really perfect traitor, Fouché", and of whom Balzac said, "He had more power over men than even Napoleon".

There was nothing heroic in the character of Joseph Fouché, save perhaps the heroic stature of his villainy. Like Talleyrand he was a churchman, but unlike Talleyrand he was a very obscure one and entered the arena of the Revolution by way of a tiny political club in Arras. Fouché always awaited the issue of an event before concluding his own allegiance. He ranged himself in the first National Convention with the moderate faction, going over to the Mountain when it finally became clear, from the energy of the popular demonstrations, that the radicals were destined for success. The mild cleric cast his vote for the death of the king and was rewarded by a revolutionary proconsulate. At Lyons he became one of the bloodiest of the Terrorists, rivalling by his wholesale executions the work of Carrier at Nantes. Governments changed and political factions crumbled, but Fouché remained. His only party was the majority. Serving this master or that one, and betraying each of them in turn, he held office under the Directory, the Consulate and the Empire. When the Bourbon succession was restored, we find the erstwhile plunderer of churches, the mitrailleur of Lyons, the Napoleonic Minister of Police, blossoming forth as an ardent legitimist, and one of the wealthiest noblemen in France.

Notwithstanding Stefan Zweig's intent and colorful exploration of Fouché's character, we never see it quite clearly. Certainly we are never admitted to the secret of Fouché's power. Zweig portrays him as a rat-like monster, silent and implacable, content to work in secret, to enjoy the substance rather than the aspect of power, and to control his superiors through fear. Yet he does not explain the man who embraced the glittering and slightly ridiculous title of Duke of Otranto, and who finally ruined himself in the effort to obtain a more desirable ministerial portfolio than the one he already held. Still, if the riddle has not been resolved for us here, we must nevertheless admit that it has been propounded uncommonly well.

MARGARET WALLACE

EUGENE V. DEBS: A MAN UNAFRAID *by McAlister Coleman* (GREENBERG. $3.50)

THERE is a dogma abroad to the effect that it is the right of every man to have his biography written once by a friend. Despite the fact that Debs has already had this service done him, Mr. Coleman repeats the eulogy

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and depicts the famous socialist leader as a little higher than the angels.

Unquestionably there was something admirable about Eugene Victor Debs. His sincerity, his dynamic personality, his persuasive oratory, his large and winning kindliness—all these were real enough; they shine through much of the war-time slander which described him as a villain and a monster. But excess of these very virtues was the reason for Debs's radicalism and his ultimate failure. The sight of human suffering hurt him and he set out to correct it without attempting to discover whether it deserved to be corrected. From the very real suffering of railroad men working under a system which was bloodthirsty to the humanitarian uplift that at the end was so large a part of Debs's socialism, there is a leap from worthy work to a thoroughly unsound philosophy. As we watch Debs's passage from organizer of the railroad unions to Socialist candidate for president, we can see the weakness of that creed which extends sympathy for the patently mistreated to humanity at large.

Mr. Coleman has written a thoroughly partisan and uncritical study. He has done it as a labor of love and with evidence of great personal admiration for his subject. And while the book will help even more to deify Debs among the socialists, the unprejudiced reader will wonder repeatedly how any man could have been so good, so long suffering, and so politically wise as Mr. Coleman's Debs is represented to be. The biography of the real Debs still remains to be written—if, of course, it is worth the trouble.

ALAN BURTON CLARKE

FRANCIS JOSEPH I, THE DOWNFALL OF AN EMPIRE *by Karl Tschuppik* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $3.75)

KARL TSCHUPPIK's book is a biography of Franz Joseph only in so far as the career of the Emperor entered into the history of his country. What the book really is is a history of Austria-Hungary from 1848 down to Franz Joseph's death, and on the whole a very fair and moderate history. Tschuppik does not make Franz Joseph either a hero or a devil, but simply a Hapsburg with all that that name implies, summing him up in these words: "Francis Joseph ruled in opposition to the tendencies of the times. Against the external forces threatening his empire he pitted the traditions of his house".

And yet with it all the Austrian Kaiser was not altogether a hide-bound conservative. Bitterly as he must have resented it, he found that after his defeat in 1866 he must compromise with the democratic spirit of the time, if only to keep his House from being swamped by the Hungarian aristocrats, and his internal policy up to 1914 was on the whole enlightened. Though with his death came the real end of the House of Hapsburg, and though his acceptance of the war with Serbia sealed the fate of his country, Tschuppik presents him not as a leading spirit in the conspiracy but as giving in somewhat doubtfully to the importunities of Conrad von Hotzendorf and Count von Berchtold. Franz Joseph was neither a warrior nor a blood-thirsty potentate, and perhaps he was less responsible for the execution of the patriots of 1848 than this book asserts. He had his blame in this as he had for the declaration of war against the Serbs, though Tschuppik fails to record what is now generally believed to be true—that he signed the order for the attack under Berchtold's false statement to him that the Serbian army had already crossed the Danube.

But the real value of Tschuppik's book lies not in its study of Franz Joseph as a character nor as a philosophic discussion of the reason for the fall of the Hapsburgs. Its value is in its concise account of the events which occurred in the Austro-Hungarian Empire between 1848 and 1914, though sometimes, as in the account of the war of 1866, these events are recounted too concisely for those not already conversant with the facts. There

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are also numerous well-etched pen-portraits of the important figures of the epoch, and an admirable study of the young Emperor's entourage—an entourage which was largely responsible for the unfortunate events of his early reign. It is a book which will not be neglected by those who wish to know what occurred in this tragic country during its latter years, though those who desire a profound knowledge of the period will consider it but as a primer.

BRIAND, MAN OF PEACE *by Valentine Thomson* (COVICI-FRIEDE. $5.00)

To BELIEVERS in race and heredity the figure of Aristide Briand is of extraordinary interest. The Frenchman Briand is neither a Latin nor a Teuton—he is a Celt. It is no mere coincidence that the careers of the Premier of France and the Ex-Premier of England, David Lloyd George, should so closely have paralleled each other, and that they should have found themselves understanding and sympathizing with each other's position in the effort to build up a new Europe. The Latin is apt to be a doctrinaire; the Anglo-Saxon, for all his sense of justice and his ability to see the other fellow's position, often possesses a certain rigidity of temperament which hobbles his very real desire for necessary compromise. More flexible by nature, and—despite his mystical trend—more cynical of human endeavour, the Celt is often able to harmonize where the Latin or Saxon alienates. This power of harmonization has been the secret of the Breton Briand's success and in large measure that of the Welshman, Lloyd George's. Yet it is probable that history will give a larger homage to Briand than to Lloyd George. Despite his apparent abandonment of some of his early socialistic principles, Briand has never really proved false to his belief in the common man. He has had to fight with the weapons at hand a battle of peculiar difficulty in a nation always nationalistic perhaps beyond all others. Left to Briand, the Peace would have been a very different affair than it is even at present. His friendship with Stresemann shows the real man, and his recent appeal for a federated Europe proclaims again the breadth of his mental and spiritual horizon. Perhaps it is true that in a federated Europe Briand sees a safer position for France itself, but to charge, as some of his enemies have, that his appeal has been made solely to solidify the status quo is ridiculous.

Mlle Thomson's life is a very readable book, and one which will be consulted when the true biography of Aristide Briand is written. It is the story of a woman who knew the Breton statesman well, and who liked him, perhaps at times to the exclusion of the man's real nature. Mlle Thomson is the daughter of Gaston Thomson, who has been a minister in many of Briand's cabinets. She is quite frankly the admirer and what is most valuable in her book are the intimate details of Briand at home and among his friends. Her picture of him as always essentially the peasant is sympathetic and true. The Frenchman, unlike the Englishman, the German, and perhaps sometimes our own countryman, is rarely a snob, and Briand remains in her pages proud of having sprung from the soil and, like Clemenceau, is happiest when in his leisure moment he is enabled to return to it. Mlle Thomson of course sketches the public life of her hero, but it is really only a sketch. It is not the statesman but the man *chez lui* whom she makes us see.

GRENVILLE VERNON

STRESEMANN *by Rudolph Olden* (DUTTON. $3.00)

STRESEMANN is one of the great figures not alone of post-war Germany but of post-war Europe and it is still far too early to calculate the full import of his championship of the policy of fulfilment and reconciliation with France. Historical perspective is impossible in a biography appearing so closely upon the

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death of its subject. But unfortunately this life of the great German statesman is also disappointing in other ways. Stresemann seldom comes alive; he remains buried in a tangle of German politics, and we know little more of him after finishing Herr Olden's book than could easily be learned from the most superficial study of his public statements and a newspaper account of his career.

The transformation of the nationalistic and belligerent Stresemann of the war period to the conciliatory statesman of Locarno and Geneva is explained by Herr Olden as a conquest of realism over emotionalism. Stresemann first had to find himself before he could win the power and influence which enabled him to carry through that sound policy which he realized was the only course open to Germany if she hoped to regain her pre-war standing. But once having set himself to the task of winning a settlement of the reparation problem and evacuation of the Rhineland, he allowed nothing to turn him aside. He consistently acted upon the principle that despite defeat Germany was entitled to negotiate on equal terms with the Allies and he always maintained an absolute confidence in his country's destiny. Stresemann was a great man and deserves a biography which will both interpret his character and determine his place in history. It is still to be written.

FOSTER RHEA DULLES

SETH HARDING, MARINER *by James L. Howard* (YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS. $3.00)

AS AUTOBIOGRAPHY *Seth Harding, Mariner* is scarcely successful, though it does manage to limn the rather bleak profile of an energetic, cautious Yankee by narrating his exploits and disasters as master of privateers and as commander in the Continental Navy. Mr. Howard has been more faithful to the secondary title of his book, "A Naval Picture of the Revolution".

Harding had an adventurous and at first highly successful career as commander of three ships equipped by the State of Connecticut. Later he commanded the *Confederacy* for the Continental Congress and after a series of triumphs fell on evil times; his ship was dismasted and later captured by the British. He was paroled, exchanged, and took out the *Diana*, a letter-of-marque, in which he was captured a second time and again exchanged. He ended his career as a naval officer as second in command to Barry on the *Alliance* and helped fire the last shot of the Revolution.

In the course of his civil career misfortune dogged him and he was even imprisoned for debt. Finally he petitioned Congress for recognition of his services and twenty-five years after the signing of the treaty of peace was awarded a pension.

The book while carefully written seems ill-proportioned, with more than half as many pages of index as text, and suffers from a lack of focus, as though the author were uncertain of his aim in writing it. But there is no doubt that it contains much matter that will prove valuable to students of Revolutionary times.

ROBERT L. ROE

MOLIÈRE *by H. Ashton* (DUTTON. $2.50)

IN THIS day of fictionized biography Professor Ashton's *Molière* is so notable an exception that one is tempted to ask, *"Que diable fait-il dans cette galère?"* The present study, one of the "Republic of Letters" series, is avowedly written both to inform the ordinary reader and to purge him of whatever false notions he may have been led to cherish through the efforts of legend-mongers and writers of theses. An ample bibliography disarms the cavillers.

Of Molière the man the author has little to offer that is new. The fault, however, is not with Professor Ashton but with the lack of existing documents. The facts of the dramatist's life are presented without undue color, if also without sparkle, but whatever

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is said, is authoritative. The exacting reader might have wished for a little more light on the marriage of the forty-year-old playwright to a girl scarcely out of her teens, who for generations has been believed his illegitimate daughter by Madeleine Béjart. Professor Ashton comments upon the mystery but goes no further, for although he would have the misinformed reader believe Molière was not guilty of incest, he does not advance either proofs or arguments of sufficient weight to dispel the current notion or to fix Armande's paternity. Again the fault lies in the meagreness of material evidence.

Professor Ashton is at his best in the critical chapters which, though they savor of *materia scholastica*, contain lucid analyses of Molière's comedies, establish them as objective and not autobiographic creations, and give a just valuation to a dramatist in whose ballets even a king did not scorn to take part.

MARY GLADSTONE: HER DIARIES AND LETTERS *edited by Lucy Masterman* (DUTTON. $5.00)

A VERITABLE open sesame to a not so distant yesterday is *Mary Gladstone: Her Diaries and Letters*, edited by Lucy Masterman, an amusing collection of reminiscences that cover the Victorian period and approach us as closely as 1924.

A bright, observant girl of unusually keen perceptions, a sense of humor and few reticences was Mary Gladstone, later Mrs. Drew, the fifth child of the English statesman. These early qualities, so essential to the recorder of diurnal events, never forsook her through the whole of her long life, so that the end, like the beginning, of her book is full of lively, entertaining, first-hand glimpses of events and personalities. A lover of the Victorian will treasure such bits as: "A long, dreary walk with Carlyle at a funereal pace", or, "Found myself on a sofa talking amicably with George Eliot . . . with her great strong face, a mixture of Savonarola and Dante. Mr. Lewes rather obtrusively enthusiastic, I thought", or this: "At a dinner Browning and Tennyson hurled ridiculous *epitaphs* at each other". Of course Disraeli, or Dizzy, her father's political opponent, is not treated with any great kindness, and it is with relish that she sets down Browning's improvization:

> We don't want to fight,
> By Jingo, if we do,
> The head I'd like to punch
> Is Beaconsfield the Jew.

FRANCES WINWAR

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A VARIED SHELF

MRS. GRUNDY *by Leo Markun* (APPLETON. $5.00)

THIS book, containing six hundred and fifty pages of text, is an attempt to present a popularized history of American and English morals during the four past centuries and to give briefly their classic and modern continental backgrounds.

Mr. Markun has written much that is amusing and informing; he has eschewed the pedantic and made perhaps a contribution of doubtful value to our knowledge of human vagaries. The sheer volume of his work is impressive. It might be counted a virtue if one could ignore the fact that he has rehashed for use here certain of his contributions to the Haldeman-Julius books. In its style, this simple, blunt and unadorned statement of peculiar fashion in personal behavior has the virtue of simplicity at the same time that it comes dangerously near monotony.

Beginning with the assumption that Mrs. Grundy is a mythical good dame who knows at any moment what is decent and what is not, Mr. Markun recounts a vast number of conflicting types of behavior in various times, and shows, as everyone knows, that Mrs. Grundy is pretty much of a fool.

As one of the debunkers, Mr. Markun takes pride in the completeness of that list of "morals" which hopelessly contradicts itself and which to him is mere grist for his mill and the butt of his indirect laughter.

But there is little explanatory material in *Mrs. Grundy*. There are no wit, no style of consequence, no observations drawn to indicate what the reader is to make of the mammoth study. The book plods, plods wearily in its recital of local and impermanent customs, and in many places is more a simple history than a study in "morals".

Without being told as much we gather from the general tone of the book that Mr. Markun believes he is writing actually about morals —morals of the British and the Americans. And the book leaves one with the impression that morality is a matter of geography, the calendar and popular whim. Perhaps the author, if asked, would say as much.

Obviously Mr. Markun has been writing about mere conventions of a social, religious, and sexual nature. Seldom in the course of his history does he approach any real ethical center in discussing a mode of behavior. He is content to point out some stupid and discarded rule of conduct, to call it a question of morality, and then to ridicule it by setting it beside the present fashion in behavior.

Mrs. Grundy is a diverting book, not for the scholar, but for the average reader who may need to be told that manners differ in different times and that each time has considered its code of social conduct one of supreme ethical rightness.

ALAN BURTON CLARKE

ROOSEVELT: THE STORY OF A FRIENDSHIP *by Owen Wister* (MACMILLAN. $4.00)

THE secondary title of this book is necessary to an understanding of its content. It is in truth the story of an almost lifelong friendship between Owen Wister, a man of letters with a wide knowledge of American conditions, and Theodore Roosevelt, an almost mythic figure to present-day readers. This story, and especially the conversations recorded with moving fidelity, cannot fail to be of

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interest even to those who never saw the author or his hero. To me, who knew them both and many others of those described, the book is keenly interesting.

Wister, who met Roosevelt at college, begins with a vivid picture of the small pale youth in a boxing match, appealing to the crowd in favor of his antagonist, and ends with a description of the great ex-president's last days at Sagamore Hill. Between these two events, he gives us many glimpses of the man America greatly loved and highly honored. Like Wister I had many talks with Roosevelt, and many letters from him but few on political subjects and none of course in the spirit of camaraderie which their common youthful experiences gave to those which this book contains. As I closed it I carried this as the main distinction of the characterization: knowing the boy Roosevelt, Wister has kept that boyish quality alive in all that he writes of the man, a perception which can be maintained only by one who has played with the boy and recalls beneath the gray hair the visage of youth. That perception was denied me although to the end of my acquaintance with Roosevelt I carried the memory of the young commissioner of police whom I first met in '96.

There is danger in a characterization, based on a boyish acquaintance, but Wister does not permit it to belittle his subject at any point. He brings out at times the youthful quality of Roosevelt but never to the lowering of his essential dignity. As he himself says, "I took no liberties with him". He shows also and very plainly that these boyish humors were, after all, only retrospective flashes, and he emphasizes once again the fact that this "impulsive" president was accustomed to make the most careful preparation before he jumped, a fact which Lawrence Abbott made clear in his story of Roosevelt's preparation for his celebrated speech to the English people on his return from Egypt.

The volume is crowded with figures of national interest—Elihu Root, Leonard Wood, Henry Adams, John Hay, Gifford Pinchot, Taft, Jusserand, Mrs. Roosevelt, Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, John La Farge, and many others of social or literary or political eminence. To one who knew all or most of these figures Wister's analysis of "the tennis cabinet" is of especial interest. I am inclined to think that this is the most valuable of all the chapters of the book. His picture of Senator Lodge is finely just; so is his judgment of Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. His Henry Cabot Lodge is the man I knew, the historian seated among his books, the intellectual aristocrat, the finest senator of them all. His dignity, his clear and concise English and his grace in debate are here touched upon. Root too is nobly presented, and Pinchot, as I knew him, the chief man of our newly-developed system of forest conservation.

Of the controversial part of the book I do not feel called upon to write. The author is sure of his ground and sets forth his concepts with calm authority. Mainly his comments are agreeable to mine, although I might not have had the courage to set them down.

HAMLIN GARLAND

THE ADAMS FAMILY *by James Truslow Adams* (LITTLE, BROWN. $4.00)

TOGETHER with a masterly understanding of their New England background, Mr. Adams brings to this interpretative sketch of the members of four generations of America's most distinguished family a keen sympathy for their character and their temperament. He is not himself related to the New England Adamses, but in his attitude toward American democracy, his feeling for England, his historical interests, he is intellectually very much akin to them. This does not prevent him from clearly recognizing their limitations nor induce him to disguise the gradual evolution of the independence and moral integrity of John Adams and John Quincy Adams into the

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aloofness and snobbishness of the fourth generation, but gives him an unusual insight into the forces which formed the Adams point of view and served to direct the careers of the different members of the family.

There is no attempt to give full biographical treatment to any one of them, and, considering them as individuals, Mr. Adams adds little either in the way of fact or interpretation to what we already know. His interest in them is as a family which first sprang into prominence when something mysterious occurred in the blood or brain of a long line of village yeoman and lifted it "to a higher plane, from which it has never descended". If we may doubt that the fourth generation of Adamses truly maintained either in character or in intellect the level reached by John Adams, and question even more the ability of the present representative of the family, who does not enter into this book, it is still intensely interesting to have brought out so clearly the common characteristics which have distinguished the family in each generation and have given it its unique place in our history.

It is Mr. Adams's thesis that with each succeeding generation the development of our democracy made it increasingly difficult for an Adams to play the rôle to which his character and ability entitled him. John Adams and John Quincy Adams could become presidents, although their independence of party prevented them from serving second terms, but thereafter the political system made it virtually impossible for any member of the family to hold high elective office.

By the time we reach the fourth generation —John Quincy II, Charles Francis, Jr., Henry and Brooks—the scene which had been so admirably adapted for the display of the talents of John, John Quincy and to a lesser degree Charles Francis, had changed so greatly that writing rather than political action was the most logical career open to them. Mr. Adams also recognizes, somewhat reluctantly, that the weight of the past was beginning to settle on this latter generation, but he ascribes an importance to Henry's books which places him in the front rank of American historians, biographers and even novelists.

Mr. Adams has not altogether maintained the high standard he set for himself in his history of New England, and *The Adams Family* is at times somewhat slow-moving and uninspired, but it is a book which throws an interesting sidelight upon American history as well as affording us a keen and on the whole highly judicious interpretation of the interaction of the Adamses and their changing environment.

WASHINGTON—LINCOLN—WILSON

by John McAuley Palmer (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $5.00)

THIS is not a comparative biographical study of the three war statesmen from whom the name of the book is derived. It is a discussion, often highly technical in nature, of preparedness as exemplified in the war experiences through which these three great presidents passed. Brigadier General Palmer has discovered a treatise on the defence of the United States written by Washington, and it was because this important legacy was not transmitted to them, in the author's opinion, that both Lincoln and Wilson "were doomed to bear the grievous burden of unprepared warfare".

Further than this it is the Washingtonian policy, as opposed to the policies based upon the military researches of General Emory Upton, toward which the United States is at last turning. His plan was for an effective regular army supplemented by a national guard, instead of a skeletonized regular army and a centralized federal volunteer force. Brigadier General Palmer is a zealous advocate of the Washingtonian Plan and the burden of his book is that a choice must be made between the two military systems and, once made, effectively carried out.

If the Washingtonian Plan had been in force in 1914, he states, we would have had

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a national guard of 600,000, mobilizable within a few days to a war strength of 1,200,000. There would have been 1,400,000 graduates of this force within military age scattered throughout the country. This citizen army would have been well trained, well equipped and well officered. "Could there have been a war of autocratic reaction under these conditions?" the Major General asks. "If America had done her part toward *keeping* the world safe for democracy, could it have been necessary to fight a war to *make* it so?"

Washington-Lincoln-Wilson is an interesting, instructive, and well-argued tract in favor of preparedness along the lines of Washington's citizen army. It is based upon the soundest historical research. But the implications of its title are in no way fulfilled and the three war statesmen are but symbols in the history of military policy.

FRAGMENTS OF A POLITICAL DIARY *by Joseph M. Baernreither* (MACMILLAN. $5.00)

THE author of this diary, which has been edited with a brief biographical sketch by Dr. Joseph Redlich, was a statesman of the Austro-Hungarian empire whose political interests led him to make a special study of the South Slav question and of his country's foreign policy in Southeastern Europe. It is not evident that he exerted any great influence in the conduct of that policy, but his accounts of his travels throughout the empire, and in Serbia and Roumania, and of his talks with political leaders from Berlin to Bucharest, do reveal how certain Austrians foresaw the danger which their country was facing through its heedless policy toward the subject races of the empire. "If things go on as they are with us," Baernreither wrote on June 4, 1914, in the last entry of his diary which is reproduced, "the ground will slip from under the feet of Imperial authority."

There is far too much political detail to make this book of great interest to the general reader and its value is largely restricted to the student of European diplomacy. He will find it replete with evidence of the dangerous position in which Austria-Hungary found herself in 1914 and of the hopelessness with which the liberals watched the mounting tide of internal discord and the Government's—especially Berchtold's—failure to appreciate the necessity of conciliation at home and abroad.

THE OTHER SIDE OF GOVERNMENT *by David Lawrence* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.00)

MR. DAVID LAWRENCE is probably better equipped to write on those multifarious activities at Washington which he has called "the other side of government" than anyone else in this country. He has had long and intimate acquaintance with men and affairs at the capital, and much experience with the actual workings of departments, bureaus, and commissions which may not be so well known to the public as Congress, but whose achievements stand far higher. Consequently it is decidedly disappointing that useful and interesting and readable as Mr. Lawrence's book is, it should still be so superficial in many of its chapters, so incomplete, and at times so evidently a product of hasty and careless composition.

The best chapters are those dealing with the activities of the Department of Commerce in studying business conditions, working toward the elimination of industrial waste, insuring full measures through the Bureau of Standards, and handing out information. The most unsatisfactory are those on such larger topics as the Supreme Court, the President's Power or Foreign Policy. The latter chapter makes no attempt to interpret the process by which our foreign policy is determined and executed, but departs entirely from the book's real character by giving a brief, valueless resumé of recent international events with a few bromidic comments on peace and war.

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A NEW ECONOMIC ORDER *edited by Kirby Page* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $3.00)

THERE are no less than twenty-four contributions to this symposium on modern economic questions. The first part of the book comprises a series of debates on capitalism, fascism, communism and socialism; the second section a series of articles on such specific questions as social insurance, workers' education, government control of industry, taxation, public ownership and consumers' coöperation. Many of the contributors are familiar writers on economic subjects; others less well known are students in specialized fields.

With very brief space allotted to the individual contributors due allowance must be made for the difficulty of confining discussion on such controversial topics to single chapters. Some few of the writers rise above such handicaps and their articles are both provocative and packed with information. But the tone of the book as a whole is superficial and journalistic. Especially in the first section of debates the treatment of socialism, communism, capitalism and fascism is obvious and inconsequential. Any real contributions to our understanding of these social forces are few and far between.

The natural place for these brief articles is in the magazines. In a book we have a right to expect more substance than is possible when a great deal of matter is spread out so very thinly. Occasionally symposia are satisfactory, but far more often, as in the case of this one, it is difficult to understand the value of their publication.

FOSTER RHEA DULLES

BLACK MANHATTAN *by James Weldon Johnson* (KNOPF. $2.50)

BLACK Manhattan enters as a rich, ripe element into the mosaic that is cosmopolitan New York. Mr. Johnson shows how successfully the Negro Metropolis, like the color which it represents, has absorbed all the shades of the spectrum of white man's civilization, urbanity and self-appraisal. While the volume is not meant to serve as a compendium on what Africa has contributed and in turn owes to the New World, yet the cumulative impression after reading it is one of amazement at the thoroughness with which in the comparatively short period of three centuries the Lybian slave has accomplished the difficult and devious process of evolution from savage to savant that it has taken his Aryan brother so long to achieve.

Few cities boast such loyal adherents as New York, and few citizens take such genuine, naïve pride in their community as do the Negro residents of Gotham. It is their love of the great world-city with its freedom, gaiety and incitements to individual distinction and mass acclaim that has sustained them in their struggle against slavery, that has helped them to withstand the furies of racial persecution, that has aided them in surviving economic and social discrimination, that has impelled them to reject Black Zionism and the appeals of a philanthropic, political separatism and has encouraged them to seek means of expressing their natural talents and endowments.

And New York provides a fitting setting for this luxuriant upshooting of a race. To do that it has had to yield up one of its most beautiful and healthful sections—Harlem. Just how the conquest has proceeded; the notable imprint which the Negro has left upon the activities that give New York its metropolitan character; his influence in the realm of sports, amusements, art, Bohemianism, night-life; his delightful and contagious *joie de vivre* and ability to extract enjoyment from the simplest diversions—all these and other pertinent things are recorded in Mr. Johnson's book with exemplary lucidity, dispassionate scholarship and critical discernment. The author's treatment of the subject proves that the quality of being "New Yorky" is more than skin

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deep, irrespective of whether the skin is dark or light, and makes every Gothamite share in the feeling of attachment which his black *concitoyen* has for New York.

LOUIS RICH

GLEANINGS IN EUROPE *by James Fenimore Cooper* (OXFORD. $3.50)

THIS volume is the second in a series of reprints of Cooper's European travel impressions, edited by Robert E. Spiller. Of all the American novelist's letters, these from England are still, as they were a century ago, the most interesting. Cooper found English society vastly more stimulating than society on the Continent, partly because the common language facilitated a free exchange of ideas, but more, doubtless, because of the peculiar feeling which existed between England and America. In England, the War of 1812 was still a fresh memory; and not all the national antagonisms aroused by the Revolution had been forgotten. As for America, it was at once anxious to assert its cultural independence of England and painfully hypersensitive to any criticism.

Thoroughly cosmopolitan in his views, Cooper was nevertheless one of the shrewdest and most tactless commentators who ever lived. He meant, by his observations upon English ways, merely to correct his countrymen where he felt that correction was needed; but he succeeded instead, to the great detriment of his subsequent fame, in infuriating them. With the English he fared little better. As he himself justly remarked: "There are two things that every American should understand. In associating with the English, if he betray the least of the toad-eater, he is despised for the meanness; this is human nature; if he manifest self-respect, and a determination to have all the rights of a gentleman, he is hated for presuming to be an Englishman's equal". Cooper, although aware that he came from a country inferior in standards of taste and conduct, felt himself to be a gentleman, and the equal in breeding of any Englishman who walked the earth. As a result, he evoked from the English a grudging respect, but seldom tolerance or affection.

However uncomfortable his unsparing comments rendered both himself and his contemporary readers, they are far more interesting and valuable to us because of their frankness. Unlike most itinerant writers who obtain admission to the society of foreign capitals, Cooper was little given to gossip; he was concerned rather by manners and morals, and his intelligent generalizations, if less racy, for instance, than the chatter of Nathaniel Parker Willis, are infinitely more absorbing. Certainly their republication here, useful as it is, is less a service to scholarship than a contribution to the enjoyment of the general reader.

MARGARET WALLACE

CONFESSIONS: A STUDY IN PATHOLOGY *by Arthur Symons* (CAPE & SMITH. $2.00)

THE eighty-seven pages which make up this book record a period of insanity which Mr. Symons passed through: one wonders, having finished them, why this record was ever written, and then begins slowly to realize that if the author had not been acquainted with Nerval and with Arvède Barine's *Névrosés*, it never would have been written. For his interest in pathology is purely literary; it is imitative; and it is the occasion for creating some splendid sentences. These confessions, moreover, are partly digression—either critical and enforced with the tritest of quotations, or autobiographical when it becomes obvious that the author is trying to "spit out the butt-ends of his days and ways", but is too much of a gentleman to spit. In these days this must be accounted unto him for righteousness, but it makes the book, whether as a study or an entertainment, singularly tedious reading.

As a document, however, *Confessions* should be bought by everybody who is inter-

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ested in literary survivals. In the first place there are all the indications of an earlier Symons—a man, that is, of considerable delicacy of taste, widely read in several languages, and definitely a poet; not a critic, however, but a rhapsodist, and in his prose generally a confirmed inhabitant of the nineties. Speaking of Watteau in this book he uses the phrase "old age of roses", a phrase which exactly fits his own prose. The roses, of course, are the Wilde-Pater-Dowson roses, candied or waxen, and now a little dusty and discolored with time. We must admit that the nineties which created them had their value; they found English literature something of a sloven and taught it an excellent lesson in deportment; and English literature, having learned its lesson, has departed, leaving Mr. Symons, an elderly dandy, still using the same fashions, the same postures, and the same intonations. At least two of the most eminent of English critics have stopped on their way long enough to tell him that style for style's sake is decadence and that evil is only good so long as it is considered as evil—but he has refused to listen. Of himself he says that he was born "not only a Fiend hid in a Cloud but a serpent of sorts". The Fiend of course is not Blake's, but rather the ideal of Mr. Symons's generation, and the serpent is "the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears".

MY THIRTY YEARS' WAR *by Margaret Anderson* (COVICI-FRIEDE. $4.00)

THE success of the modern autobiography depends upon the keenness of its author's perceptions of other people; and this dependence is so absolute that it constitutes an abrupt departure from anything that was being done so near in time as ten years ago. Its outward signs are the profession of good talk as an art in itself, and a precise examination of the mechanics of living; two things which express a definite activity on the part of intelligent society, and which mark, probably enough, the beginnings of a new literary form. Such beginnings were easily discernible in *Music At Midnight* by Muriel Draper, and now re-appear in *My Thirty Years' War*, two books which are likely to set the standard for future autobiography.

Apart from glorifying conversation and the Mason-Hamlin piano, *My Thirty Years' War* concerns itself with three things: *The Little Review* and those who had the privilege of being associated with it; Jane Heap, and the curious strophic-antistrophic co-editorship without which *The Little Review* might have died of infantile paralysis; and Margaret Anderson's conversion from the re-active to the active life, which occurs at the end of the book but colors the whole of it; so much so that, for the proper understanding of it, this book should be begun at the end and read backward. Margaret Anderson has a genius for rapid portraiture, a remarkable power of selection, and an egocentricity which prevents her from experiencing other people as fully as she might.

The real significance of this book, however, lies in its manner. It is in a good tradition. It is worth remembering that the extraordinary development of Restoration English prose can be directly attributed to conversation and science, a favorable conjunction never repeated, or likely to be repeated, in English history. It is just possible that American literature is developing under very much the same conjunction. For the effect of a new science upon prose, let anyone read the new psychological treatise; to the effect of conversation upon prose, *My Thirty Years' War* and *Music At Midnight* are significant testimony. While Muriel Draper's is a better book, since brilliant maturity is more effective than brilliant immaturity, both have this in common—a personal style, fresh, unselfconscious, vigorous, but *formal,* which is singularly important, not only as an achievement in itself, but as an indication of what good talk may yet, by the grace of God, do to the body of prose within the lifetime of us all.

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THE OUTLAW YEARS *by Robert M. Coates* (MACAULAY. $3.00)

MR. COATES is a wise man: this is better than doing *surréaliste* "Conversations" for *transition*, and better than *The Eater of Darkness*, though it is too clearly a library compilation to represent a solid achievement. Moreover, when fact out-Herods the Herod of romantic fiction, the result is always a little depressing; and this book, in whose hard light even Deadwood Dick begins to pale, is too heavily charged with repeated beastly murder to be even "very tolerable unpleasant reading". None the less, in these four stories of the five great American outlaws who terrorized the old Spanish frontier a hundred years ago, you are permitted now and again to observe more closely than usual those details which attend the obscure birth of legend. Take the case of Micajah Harpe, the homicidal maniac, and terror of the Natchez Trace. He was beheaded alive as he lay with a bullet in his spine. "You are a God damned rough butcher," said he in the midst of the operation, "but cut on and be damned to you." Or the case of Hare, the cold-blooded dandy, who was fatally delayed on a journey by the vision of a white horse standing across his path. "I think this white horse was Christ," he said. This sort of detail is invaluable, and there is just enough of it to make *The Outlaw Years* an unusual book. But, what is more to the point, if the sober and forceful quality of his prose is any indication, Mr. Coates will one day be doing far better things than this.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

WAR, POLITICS AND RECONSTRUCTION *by H. C. Warmoth* (MACMILLAN. $3.50)

THE last surviving governor of the Reconstruction period in the South looks back from the high summit of eighty-seven years over the scene of the storms in which he had an active part with the serenity that becomes his age. His experiences in the war as an officer on the Northern side were uncomfortable and brought him no honors; his adventures in politics were bloody and distracting. He had to sit on bayonets in office and contend with evils laid, he says, most unjustly at his door. Four years (1868-72) in the executive chair of Louisiana gave his name a place among the "carpet-baggers". This definition he disclaims, as, although hailing from Illinois, he was of Virginia lineage, of German origin via the migration that came to New York and Pennsylvania from the Palatinate, but he willingly admits he might have been a "scalawag".

His reminiscences recall the cordial foregathering of the Union and Confederate soldiers, and the manifestations of helpfulness toward former adversaries, which were cut short when the politician and adventurer took the place of the soldier. He denies that Negro domination was a fact during his term of office and reminds his readers of the very influential creole class in his state, though revealing what most men have forgotten, that a group from Santo Domingo backed a daily paper in New Orleans to sustain a movement in favor of establishing Louisiana as a colored commonwealth. His memories fill in some chinks where history is faulty. Most interesting of his notes is the too-brief account of the celebrated race up the Mississippi between the steamers *Natchez* and *Robert E. Lee*. He was a chance passenger on the latter. The reader will learn with surprise that this noted flyer was the property of Oakes Ames —the Massachusetts shovel manufacturer who fathered the Crédit-Mobilier scandal— and his New Orleans associate, Asa S. Mansfield. To other distinctions Mr. Warmoth adds a credit, which he evidently relishes, of believing himself to be the only man (he was then Collector of the Port of New Orleans) who ever told the redoubtable Theodore Roosevelt, Civil Service Commissioner at the time, to "go to the devil".

DON C. SEITZ

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THE WORST JOURNEY IN THE WORLD *by Apsley Cherry-Garrard* (DIAL PRESS. $5.00)

APSLEY CHERRY-GARRARD'S *The Worst Journey in the World*, is an account of the 1911-13 Scott South Polar Expedition. It includes the Depot Journey, the terrific Winter Journey in search of Emperor penguin embryos, and the fatal Polar Journey, in which Scott and his four companions lost their lives, the death of the last three being due, as Mr. Cherry-Garrard points out, to ignorance of proper diet: they were too exhausted to make the final twelve miles to One Ton Depot.

Told without literary device or any affectation by a man who is a scientist, an explorer, perhaps a good deal of a hero, but never by any chance a littérateur, this book succeeds in being one of the most thrilling and absorbing narratives in modern literature, and makes Byrd's journey by airplane to the pole seem no more harassing than a train trip from Albany to Troy. It is as packed with suspense as a mystery story, as tragic as a Russian novel, and as full of information as a text-book. It is absolutely convincing. Merely as a first-hand account of the terrific suffering that men will endure to add a fact to scientific data it is inspiring. It is illustrated with drawings and sketches made under the most adverse conditions by Wilson, and is supplied with maps and an index which make it clearly comprehensible to the lay mind. Much of the text is drawn from letters and diaries of Wilson, Scott, Bowers, and others of the expedition.

ROBERT L. ROE

CRUCIBLES *by Bernard Jaffe* (SIMON & SCHUSTER. $5.00)

DISTINGUISHED as the winner of the Francis Bacon Award for the Humanizing of Knowledge, *Crucibles* bids for the reader's attention under the handicap of a comparison with Paul de Kruif's *Microbe Hunters*. Fortunately, the book overcomes the handicap by virtue of its own excellence. It presents a splendid series of biographies, in which the development of chemistry is traced through the careers of those men who devoted their lives to the science.

Mr. Jaffe tells us of Trevisan, who spent his life in pursuit of the philosopher's stone, whereby he would be able to transmute baser elements into gold. He tells us of that unparalleled faker, Becher, whose theory of phlogiston befogged research in chemistry for many decades, yet finally turned the attention of his colleagues and disciples from the fabrication of gold to the formulation of theories explaining natural phenomena. He tells us of the brusque Paracelsus; of Dalton, who sponsored the atomic theory as we know it today; of Berzelius, who brought about the standardization of chemical symbols. Others follow in review, all brilliantly etched, all evaluated with restraint—Cavendish, Lavoisier, Avogadro, Mendeléef, the Curies, Thomson, Moseley.

In presenting these men of the laboratory, Mr. Jaffe avoids a purely chronological account of their lives. He engages the reader's interest by opening almost all his biographies with illuminating episodes in the lives of his subjects, or picturesque quotations from their writings, and succeeds in presenting understandable pictures of them and clear conceptions of their significance in the growth of chemistry out of alchemy to its present status among the sciences.

Through the lives of most of Mr. Jaffe's subjects runs the thread of the search after truth—the explanation of the universe. In an epilogue, the author takes up a position in the shadow of Eddington and Jeans, expressing his opinion that we may be as far from such an explanation as the fiery Trevisan who, dreaming one night of a king who revealed to him a magic formula disclosing the secret of all things, arose to cry in bewilderment, "I do not understand!"

IRVING ASTRACHAN

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THE FUTURE OF DRINKING *by Gilbert Seldes with drawings by Don Herold* (LITTLE, BROWN. $2.00)

THIS book is more serious than it looks; the comic-strip illustrations and the frivolous typography mislead one a bit. It is an essay on American post-Prohibition drinking habits, written with wit enough, and containing a fair number of interesting observations and an equal number of high-class platitudes, but it is neither profound enough nor funny enough to be absorbing.

It consists principally of a brief history of the Temperance movement, an exposition of the decline of the art of drinking well, an indictment of the speakeasy as a place of entertainment, and an over long dissertation on present-day drinking habits in urban America. There is a great deal of obvious description of people's fatuousness and banality, of their lack of individuality and spirit and grace, in connection with their drinking. But these qualities have been exposed and exposed and exposed, and Mr. Seldes's remarks seem no more new and shining because they concern only a single and perhaps somewhat neglected part of George F. Babbitt's life.

As to the future of drinking, Mr. Seldes confesses that he is a bit vague. He is inclined to think that drinking will tend to diminish and disappear in many strata of society. He points out that it does not fit very well into the scheme of living of the American bourgeoisie—but he is much too glib about it. He makes the critic's common error of considering only the man whom he sees, and ignoring the inarticulate, frustrate man inside, for whom liquor captures a little of the ecstasy, the fine frenzy of living, which he once expected and has never given up hoping to find somewhere on his pedestrian way. Mr. Seldes's neglect of this consideration makes his pretensions to more than superficiality seem empty, and his prediction of the decline of middle-class drinking mere snobbery. His topic is too much tied up with the whole question of American personality and all that lies behind it to permit of such treatment in anything short of a hilariously funny book—which this certainly is not.

ROBERT S. JOSEPHY

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FLEDGLING FICTION

BEGINNING AUTHORS

"Really!" said the lady to whom one inadequate reason for my existence had been explained. "So you review first novels—just the work of new authors! How interesting! Now tell me, just what are our young people writing about?"

I spare you the lady's italics as I spare you my (unspoken) reply. But her inquiry inspires reflection. The mildly astonishing fact is that the 1930 crop of first novels displays a quite extraordinary degree of variety. There is as little uniformity of theme as there is of quality; and persons who like to talk about trends and tendencies in contemporary work of any kind would find little support for any theories they may have in the books which lie before me now.

I do not mean that these are books of an exceptional originality. Healthy emulation has had its share in the making of most of them. Scarcely a volume of the present group but owes its existence to a purely literary inspiration. It was born of an impulse engendered by other books, rather than of the need to write of something clearly imagined and long lived with. Even the most substantial of the recent first novels—*Button Hill* by Gordon Stowell (Smith. $2.50)—owes something to the fact that H. G. Wells once wrote *Joan and Peter* and *Ann Veronica* and *Marriage*, that Arnold Bennett wrote of the Five Towns and J. D. Beresford of Jacob Stahl. But no matter. The book has stuff of its own; it springs from the contemplation of a living subject; and its considerable merits are the achievement of its author.

Button Hill is a British suburb, one of those new-made communities which sometimes awaken in their inhabitants an almost religious patriotism. Such at least it was in the nineties, when those two middle-aged young men, Mendip and Ellersby met as newcomers to the place and solemnly planned the common future of the town and of the children who should inherit it. The children come and grow up, as does Button Hill itself; but the ones do not inherit the other. Instead there is a war, which leaves few enough of the young people alive; and time and changing conditions work their will upon the town itself, until even the once-prophetic Mendip moves to a more exalted address. And time deals variously with Mendip and Ellersby the elders, coarsening the one, refining the spirit of the other, until death makes way with them both and there is an end to them and their plans. That is the story Mr. Stowell tells, with an abundance of detail, sufficient to fill and animate a book of more than average size, with a large gallery of characters, most of whom are presented to us clearly-drawn and full of humanity, with only a hint of condescension toward his people to mar his workmanship. It is a book of uneven texture, now adroit now cumbersome in its handling, but vigorous and honest throughout.

Impressive in a somewhat different way is Mr. Gilmore Millen's *Sweet Man* (Viking. $2.50). I am not certain just how much of the undeniable fascination of Mr. Millen's book is due to the complete unmorality of his characters. Here are people living wholly on the visceral plane. John Henry, the Sweet Man of the story, is a mulatto boy in whom amiability and an unbridled sexual appetite are combined in equal proportions, and the story of his life is the chronicle of a succes-

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sion of amorous encounters, too casual, too easily achieved to be called conquests. Yet there is nothing repellent in this record of his career; his good nature and his utter animal simplicity rob even the final episode of offensiveness. The reader observes creatures from another world and thus is spared a shocked reference to his own kind.

Mr. Millen tells his story vividly and with a total absence of self-consciousness. His background, principally the disorderly district of Memphis, is amazingly alive. It will be interesting to see what he can do with a theme less violent in its impact upon the readers' attention.

I have heard and seen little discussion of the *Son of John Winteringham* by Warrene Piper (Houghton Mifflin. $2.50), and am led to wonder if it has escaped the attention it deserves. There is so much that is really excellent in the book: such polish and assurance, such variety to the people and such really admirable dialogue, that it will be a pity if it does not find a large audience. As a picture of an eccentric family it is bound to be compared with *The Constant Nymph* (which it in no way resembles) nor would I place it below Miss Kennedy's work in the vivacity with which Miss Piper has drawn her characters. Less quaint than the Sangers the young Winteringhams unquestionably are, and there is a less obvious appeal to the sentiments in their story. No less, I find the story a singularly interesting one.

One turns from the purple splendors of the publisher's description of *The Breed of Basil* by Thomas Bell (McBride. $2.50), to the book itself with somewhat the same reluctance with which one approaches those legendary and long absent friends of friends who after years of being praised suddenly appear in the flesh to their own discomfiture. All these glowing things cannot be true; indeed, they are not. Yet the book itself is an agreeable tale, done a bit after the manner of Mr. Cabell, but not oppressively so. Mr. Bell writes with a jaunty air; his ladies are frail and his men robust. And if the whole is merely a dashing trifle, it is a very graceful one.

More pretentious and less pleasing is *Three Half Moons* by Stephen Brent (McBride. $2.50), a romance of Alessandro de Medici, which has more than a little of the unreality which almost all historical novels possess. There is effective drama in this, but it is marred by a kind of cloudy poetizing.

Earnest folk continue to write uninspiring novels, usually about life in rural America. The current specimens of this *genre* include *A Prisoner in Babylon* by Madeleine D. Strain (Macaulay. $2.00), the story of a country youth, who, orphaned and reared by a brutish guardian, is consistently disillusioned by people and nature itself, until at the end he finds solace in a platonic marriage. Beyond its serious purpose and one or two vivid scenes there is little to commend in the novel. *With Trailing Banners* by Estelle Aubrey Brown (Little Brown. $2.50) also deals with disillusionment. As a child Mary Melton becomes infatuated with Bart Hawkins, a well-meaning but coarse-fibred village boy, who after getting one girl with child runs away from the town. When he returns several years later Mary, despite her friends and her own better judgment, marries him. She endures poverty and the gradual demolition of her ideals for twenty years, but at the end, after her son has beaten a sick puppy to death and she has heard the boy's father laughing with his son over the latter's incestuous relations with his half-sister, she decides to leave home and seek happiness elsewhere. And a good thing too.

It is a relief to turn to the wholly captivating artificiality of *Three-A-Day* (Century. $2.50), Dorothy Heyward's story of small time vaudeville folk. Here Mrs. Heyward gives a very convincing picture of vaudeville life as a background for a sentimental love story. The book is well contrived and equally well told. It is excellent entertainment.

GUY HOLT

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THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE, LIFE MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, IN COÖPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF AMERICA

For the severalth time your reporter is impelled to remark, after surveying the result of the current compilation of librarians' reports, that the taste of the great American reading public for a good story is unerring. Is there any possible list of twelve current novels which would contain a higher percentage of good stories than that appended here? Grant that such a list might contain a higher percentage of literary quality —though that is open to argument—or of insight into the deeper problems of a changing civilization; those are not the qualities readers seek when they go to the circulation departments of the public libraries. They want good stories, as most of the rest of us do, stories that do not excite them too furiously to think, stories that deal with the lives and experiences of people not too different from themselves, in circumstances in which they can imagine themselves. And what is great literature, after all, but just that kind of story! —F. P. S.

NOVELS

1. CIMARRON	*Edna Ferber*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
2. EXILE	*Warwick Deeping*	KNOPF
3. ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT	*Erich Maria Remarque*	LITTLE, BROWN
4. THE WOMAN OF ANDROS	*Thornton Wilder*	BONI
5. THE DOOR	*Mary Roberts Rinehart*	FARRAR & RINEHART
6. THE SCARAB MURDER CASE	*S. S. Van Dine*	SCRIBNER'S
7. YOUNG MAN OF MANHATTAN	*Katharine Brush*	FARRAR & RINEHART
8. ROGUE HERRIES*	*Hugh Walpole*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
9. THE GREAT MEADOW	*Elizabeth Madox Roberts*	VIKING
10. LAUGHING BOY*	*Oliver La Farge*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
11. CORONET	*Manuel Komroff*	COWARD-MCCANN
12. WHITEOAKS OF JALNA	*Mazo de la Roche*	LITTLE, BROWN

GENERAL

1. BYRON	*André Maurois*	APPLETON
2. NEW WORLDS TO CONQUER	*Richard Halliburton*	BOBBS-MERRILL
3. THE HUMAN MIND*	*Karl Menninger*	KNOPF
4. THE GREEN PASTURES*	*Marc Connelly*	FARRAR & RINEHART
5. JOURNEY'S END	*R. C. Sherriff*	BRENTANO
6. THE ART OF THINKING	*Ernest Dimnet*	SIMON & SCHUSTER
7. GRANDMOTHER BROWN'S HUNDRED YEARS	*Harriet Connor Brown*	LITTLE, BROWN
8. MARRIAGE AND MORALS	*Bertrand Russell*	LIVERIGHT
9. TWELVE AGAINST THE GODS	*William Bolitho*	SIMON & SCHUSTER
10. HENRY THE EIGHTH	*Francis Hackett*	LIVERIGHT
11. MRS. EDDY	*Edwin Franden Dakin*	SCRIBNER'S
12. TREATISE ON THE GODS	*H. L. Mencken*	KNOPF

* *This title has not previously appeared in the Monthly Score.*

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